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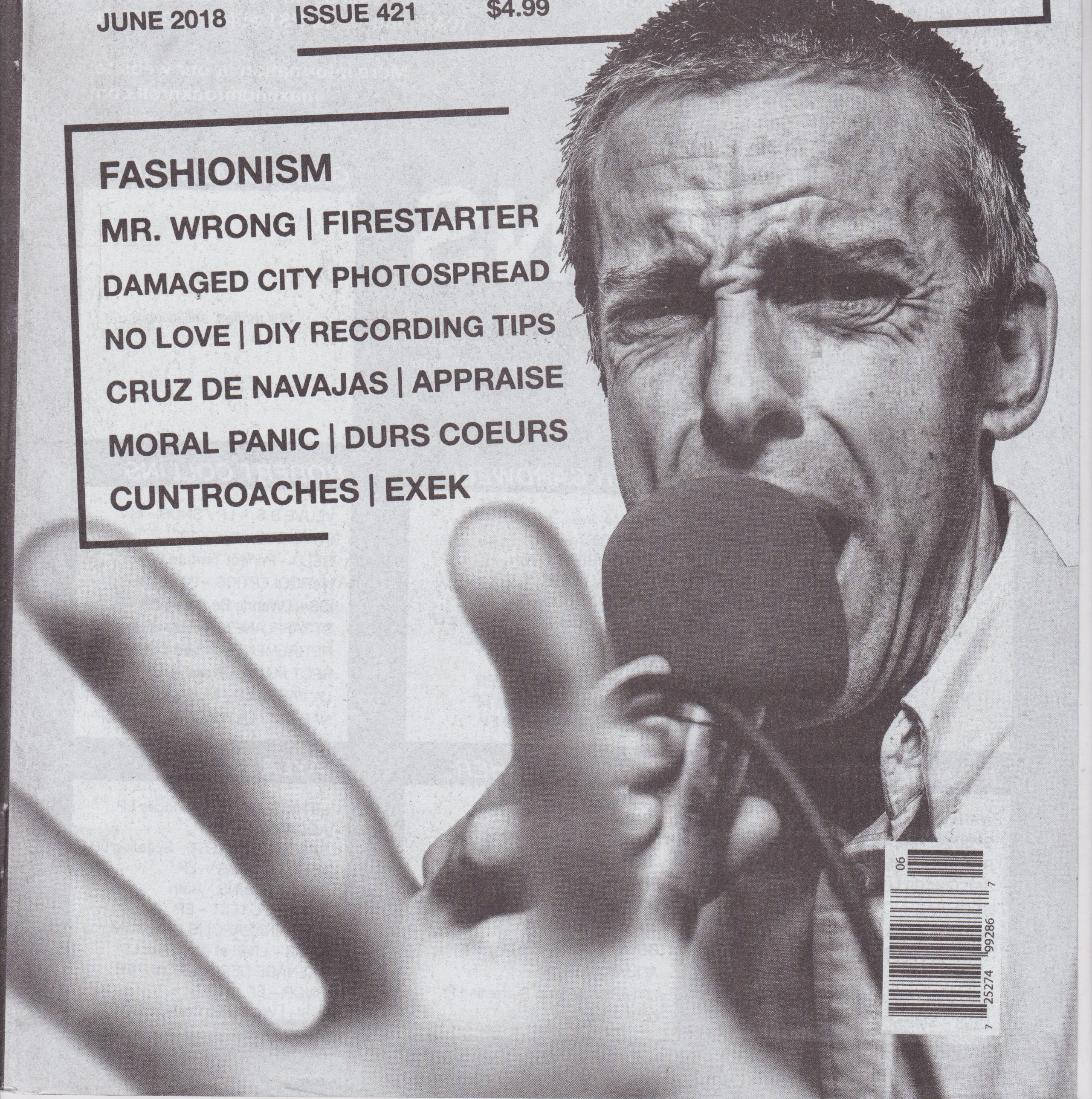

FASHIONISM

MR. WRONG | FIRESTARTER

DAMAGED CITY PHOTOSPREAD

NO LOVE | DIY RECORDING TIPS

CRUZ DE NAVAJAS | APPRAISE

MORAL PANIC | DURS COEURS

CUNTROACHES | EXEK

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Send records, demos, zines, and letters to PO Box 460760 San Francisco, CA 94146-0760

Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

Still thrilled, still living.

MATT BADENHOP

Spent too much on tour...

MITCH CARDWELL

DRAMA – live
LIMP WRIST – live
LARS FINBERG – live
ALICE BAG – live
WARM BODIES – LP
SPECIAL INTEREST – Spiraling LP
CONTROL TEST – Verdadero Criminal EP
RABID DOGS – No Fun EP
ISS – I Wanna Be Dated EP
HJELLE – Fan Ta NPM EP

ROBERT COLLINS

VEUVE S.S. – LP / SNOR – EP
PHYSIQUE – live + 12"
GELD – Perfect Texture LP
NARCOLEPTICS – 2018 EP
ISS – I Wanna Be Dated EP
STRAFPLANET – Freizeitstress LP
RETIREMENT – Priced Out EP
SECT MARK – Worship LP
LA VASE – LP / MUTILATE – CS
NADSAT / ULTRASURF – split EP

JOAN DETORO

WARM BODIES – LP
SPECIAL INTEREST – Spiraling LP
PHYSIQUE – live + 12"
SECT MARK – Worship LP
SCUMRAID – Control LP
AQUARIUM – LP
TEENAGE DEPRESSION – EP
SNOR – EP
ABSOLUT / SVAVELDIOXID – split LP
UBIK – Sleep EP

MIRANDA FISHER

PERVERTS AGAIN – LP
ISS – I Wanna Be Dated EP
GREAT PLAINS – both
SPECIAL INTEREST – Spiraling LP
GINO AND THE GOONS – LP
WARM BODIES – LP
BETA BLOCKERS – LP
AQUARIUM – LP
LITHICS – Mating Surfaces LP
GSP – live

LAYLA GIBBON

LITHICS – Mating Surfaces LP
AQUARIUM – LP
SPECIAL INTEREST – Spiraling LP
WARM BODIES – LP
GREAT PLAINS – both
CONTROL TEST – EP
THE MINNEAPOLIS URANIUM CLUB – LIVE! at Arci Taun LP
TEENAGE DEPRESSION – EP
SNOR – EP
ISS – I Wanna be Dated EP

GREG HARVESTER

SCUMRAID – Control LP
CONTORTURE – live
IMPULSO – live
ARROTZAK –live
MANAGAITZ – live
COME HOLY SPIRIT – LP
THE EX – 27 Passports CD
NERVE BEATS – LP
PERVERTS AGAIN – LP
CCR HEADCLEANER – EP

RAY LUJAN

BEDFORD FALLS – LP
THE BOMBPOPS – Dear Beer EP
FLACKOFF – The Flackoff EP EP
FLOWERS AND FIRE – Fire 45
INDONESIAN JUNK – CD
K7'S – Take 1 CD / TSOL – live
LITHICS – Mating Surfaces LP
MR. T EXPERIENCE – LP
YOUNG ROCHELLES – LP
ZOOPARTY – Lardass LP

FRED SCHRUNK

WARM BODIES – LP
AQUARIUM – LP
SPECIAL INTEREST – Spiraling LP
ISS – I Wanna Be Dated EP
UBIK – Sleep EP
FUTURA – Spit On The Flag EP
PMS – EP
FLACKOFF – The Flackoff EP EP
LITHICS – Mating Surfaces LP
BETA BLOCKERS – LP

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MARISSA MAGIC

Flying...

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This is a contributor-driven magazine. We need help writing reviews, editing, doing layouts, processing mail, maintaining our archive, and more.

Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

CAROLYN KEDDY

THE HIPSHAKES – "Shot / Samba"
UBIK – Sleep-EP / PMS – EP
!VAMOS! – LP / NEWS – 2xEP
GINO AND THE GOONS – LP
ISS – I Wanna Be Dated EP
LITHICS – Mating Surfaces LP
GREAT PLAINS – both LPs / TEENAGE DEPRESSION – EP
CHILD MOLESTERS – 12"
REVEREND BEAT-MAN & NICOLE IZOBEL GARCIA – live

ROTTEN RON READY

FUTURA – Spit On The Flag EP
NARCOLEPTICS – 2018 EP
SNOR – EP
RABID DOGS – No Fun EP
PROFOSS – Min Egen Profoss
SPECIAL INTEREST – Spiraling LP
ABSOLUT / SVAVELDIOXID – split LP
PHYSIQUE – Punk Life Is Shit 12"
SCUMRAID – Control LP
STRANGERS – live

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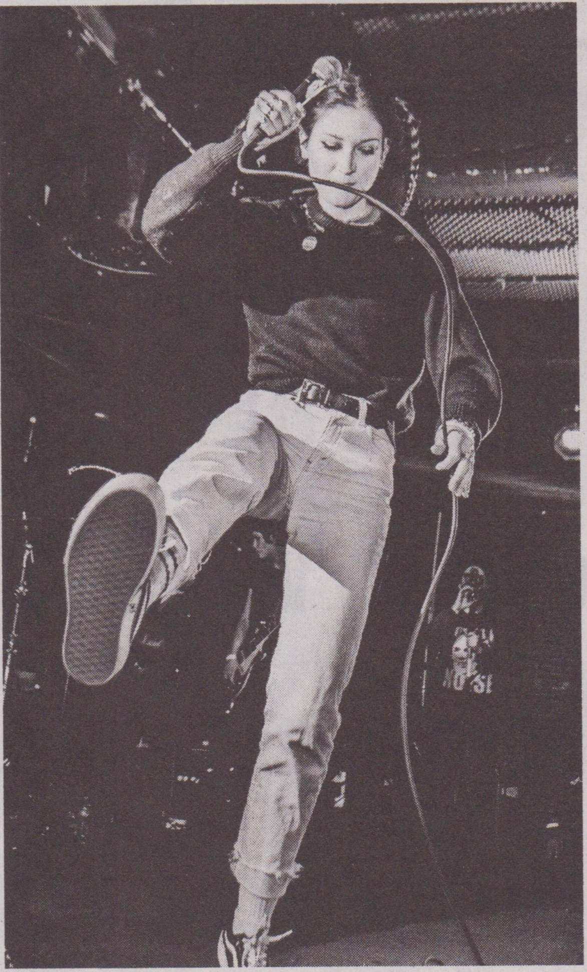

Firewalker, Damaged City Fest, photo by Angela Owens.

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REAR COVER: Firestarter by Teppei Miki, Cuntroaches by Jeugd & Muziekcentrum.

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We're looking for a distribution coordinator! Do you have the patience to deal with the USPS? The persistence to chase down money from forgetful punks? A love of spreadsheets and desire to spread inky thumbprints around the world? The right candidate will be detail-oriented, unafraid of the telephone, and ready to drop everything and move to the land of techies, wing-nuts, and permanent jean jacket weather. Get in touch.

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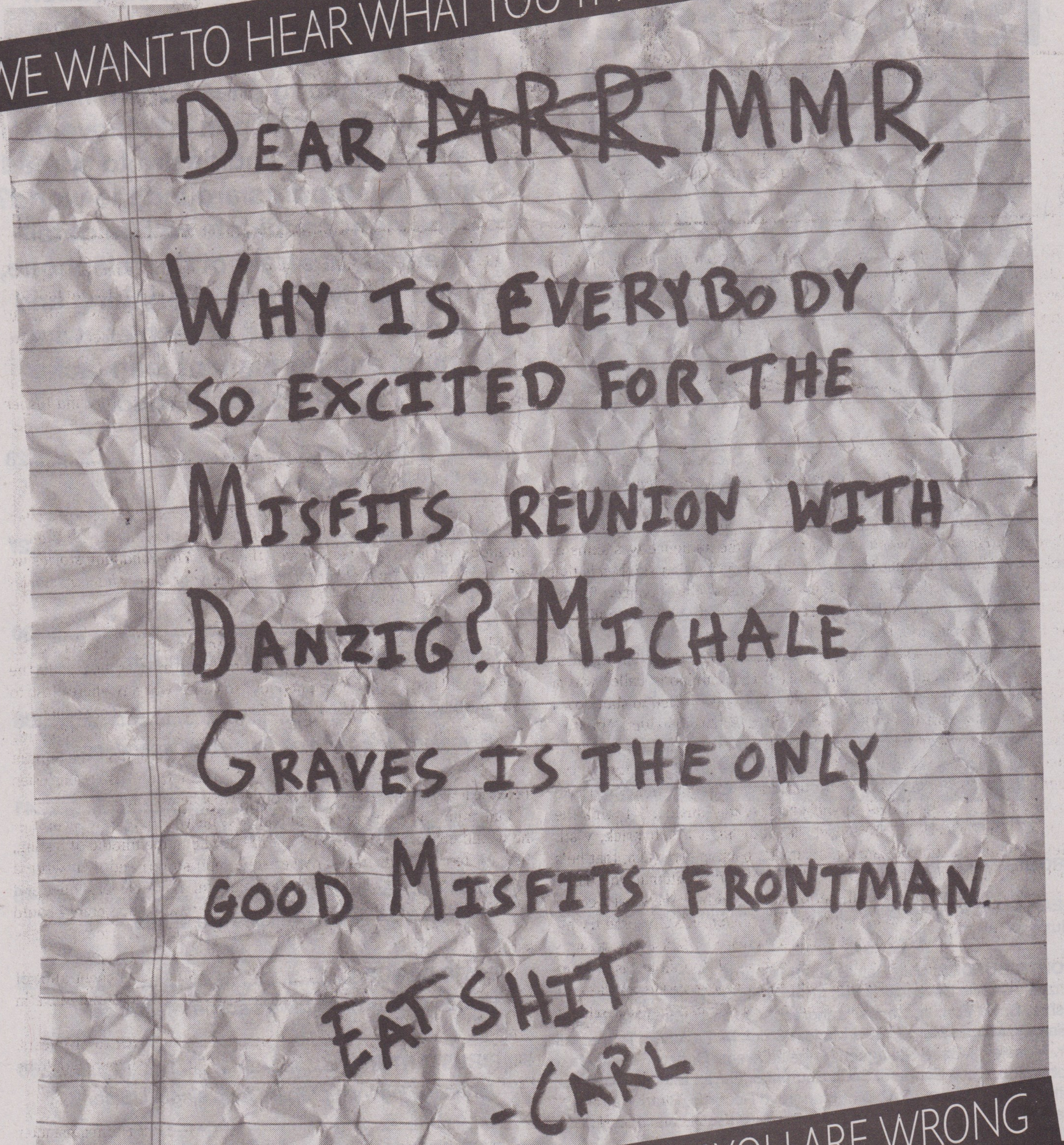
WE WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK



DEAR ~~MRR~~ MMR,

WHY IS EVERYBODY SO EXCITED FOR THE MISFITS REUNION WITH DANZIG? MICHALE GRAVES IS THE ONLY GOOD MISFITS FRONTMAN.

EAT SHIT
-CARL

...EVEN IF YOU ARE WRONG

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LETTERS

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Response not guaranteed.

We mistakenly credited Chelsey del Castillo for the image of Little Debbie and the Crusaders for the cover of issue #420. This was an error on our part—the photo was taken by Jeffie Freeman. We are deeply sorry for our mistake.

* * *

Dear *MRR*,

Gimmie a break. Why did it take an anonymous caller to tell you that the SPLC had written about NYC Oi! Fest 2? I wrote a thousand words about it my column in issue #404. (Read it dummies.) The SPLC and Brooklyn Vegan (hard vomit) painted the show like a scene from *American History X*, when really a third of the audience was skins of color (SOC). Tell the patriotic brown, black and Asian skinheads that attended and played the Oi! fest that they were playing a concert for the promotion of "bigotry and the attraction of others to extremist politics." Tell the white ones too. They'll be just as surprised.

I stand by my praise of anyone putting on Oi! shows "in the face of outsiders and agitators." You think that anonymous caller was a skinhead who values Oi! music? You think whoever tried to shut down that fest was a part of any Oi! scene? Sha. Right. Outsider. Agitator. And if my review of the live recording from that night was the straw that got me booted what's up with the supportive email from the editors regarding my rebuttal to homeboy in issue #419 who took offense to my purported "endorsement of shitty right-wing music..."? I think the words "beyond perfect" were used. Nobody likes a soft prick, y'all. Next time let a skinhead know the camel's back is sore (aka, that he's making your volunteer punk prestige "job" more difficult than you'd like it to be). Anyway, I'm grateful that *Maximum* did for me what I could not do for myself. Ego is a tough boss to quit on. It's tiresome trying to shove round Oi! pegs into the square holes of *MRR* every month. Though I'd rather not leave under the banner of "possible fascist," in a magazine run by and for people who think moderate Democrats are Nazis, it makes sense a non-aligned patriotic civic nationalist would be cast as such. Not my problem.

That's it. It was fun for a while. Take care.

—Turbo Jorgensen
AmericanBootGang@gmail.com

Hey Turbo,

Feel like there's not much to discuss here. Your passionate defense of an event at which there is video of attendees literally sieg heiling just doesn't cut it with us. To us it's not a matter of whether or not there were people of color at the show, or whether or not it was a person of color sieg heiling—it makes no difference to us. The act of sieg heiling does not have a plurality of meanings: it solely stands for an adherence to a fascist ideology and a social Darwinist view of others considered to be "degenerates" or those seen as lesser than those with power. Neither of us was a coordinator in issue #404, and as far as the incident in #419 that you refer to, well, your response was "beyond perfect" in that you thoroughly defended your stance, nothing more. We're not against Oi! as a genre, but we're pretty solidly against white supremacy and anti-Semitism, and when Oi! and racism align, well, our hatred of racism is always going to take precedence.

— Joan DeToro & Miranda Fisher

* * *

We intended to run this alongside all of the other Tim Yohannan stories that we ran in issue 420. We apologize for its exclusion. We plan to include a page on our website with the other Tim Yohannan stories we received—be on the lookout for that! Send your Tim Yohannan stories to: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

When Tim and I met for the first time in San Francisco in 1986 I was 21 years old and he was 41. What was fascinating to me was the fact that he was old and cool. In my world nobody "that old" was anywhere close to someone like Tim. Everybody over thirty was established or square, not interested in hardcore punk rock and running a fanzine. Usually young people don't listen to old people, since young people think they invent everything new. I was probably the same, but in Tim's case, I did listen because it was great to have a adult doing what he was doing.

One thing I was shocked to find out was his way to review records—he would only skip over it (you put the needle in the middle of a song, listen a few seconds, take another song, and so on) and then write a review. My requirement was to listen to the full record at least once and read all the lyrics in order to write a proper review. At that point I could not imagine that those two decades of more life experience might have led to that system.

That year and the following visits to San Francisco I spent a lot of time with Tim at the *MRR* House, at Gilman, at the radio station...I'm very happy to have had the chance to do so!

When he died at age 53 in 1998 he had running *MRR* for 16 years. I'm 53 years now and have run *Trust* for 32 years. I wish there would be no reason to write this. Long live *Maximum Rocknroll*!

—Dolf Hermannstädter
Trust Fanzine
Bremen, Germany
trust-zine.de

* * *

What if? What if people are right? What if the core of what makes punk, punk is dead? Walking to the station, a few beers deep and on the way out to crawl a few rock bars my friend and I got talking, like half-drunk people do. As part of this hazy conversation he said to me something along the lines of "I feel punk's more an image these days than an attitude." The comment didn't really resonate with me at the time but it stuck in my mind for over a week like a splinter nonetheless. The idea that the attitude behind punk might die or even already be dead scares me, even though I'm fairly certain that, to one extent or another, it's alive and well. The attitude I mean is the one of resistance and speaking out for what's important. An outlook on life that causes people to stand up and challenge tyrants and arseholes no matter the likelihood of a successful outcome. It's the very thing that made me a punk to begin with. The idea that it might die one day terrifies me. Part of this fear is rooted in the fact that it's an attitude that pre-dates punk rock. Can you imagine a world where Martin Luther King hadn't adopted a punk rocker's attitude? The world would be a worse place if he hadn't stood up and spoken out and led others to do the same. A future without that drive to rebel and do what's right is not one I want to see. The world is in such a shitty state that it is in desperate need of a "fuck you" kind of attitude. The only way the world has dug itself out of these kinds of holes before is through popular resistance, and in the same way that history is doomed to repeat itself, it's the only way it'll dig itself out again. So while it might be regrettably true that the punk rock music scene isn't as big as it once was, don't let anyone say punk is dead or that it's anything less than it was. Punk and being a punk is so much more than just the music. It's a whole outlook on the world around you and an immutable drive to stand up to those looking to accumulate and abuse power for their own means. The point here is: next time someone tells you punk is dead, punch the fucker.

— Scott Blackburn

* * *

Dearest *Maximum*,

I don't know why no one is talking about it, but we need to discuss the most pressing issue facing modern punk. That's right, I'm talking about former *MRR* columnist Rev Norb's use of "wanna" as "want a" in 1994's "(Do You Wanna) Grilled Cheese." Now, I know what you're thinking, and I agree to an extent. Yes, Boris the Sprinkler didn't come into their own until 1997's *Mega Anal*. You're right. But Rev. Norb still has to answer for his transgression against the Ramones. If he hadn't jumped ship to *Razorcake*, perhaps he could have answered me directly in these pages, but I'm not about to write a letter to that snot rag, am I? In fact, I resent Rev. Norb for taking his *American Grilled Cheese Review* over to *Razorcake* to begin with, because it means that I still have to pick up a copy ever other month. But I digress. The issue at hand is that it is firmly established in punk that "wanna" means "want to." If Rev. Norb had chosen to title his song "(Do You Wanna) Grill Cheese," we wouldn't have any problems. But, by using "wanna" as "want a," the good reverend has bit his thumb at not one, not two, but (by my count) at least ten Ramones songs by title alone (which I have enumerated right here:

1. "I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend"
2. "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue"
3. "I Don't Wanna Go Down to the Basement"
4. "I Don't Wanna Walk Around with You"
5. "Now I Wanna Be a Good Boy"
6. "Do You Wanna Dance?"
7. "I Wanna Be Well"
8. "I Wanna Be Sedated"
9. "I Wanna Live"
10. "I Don't Wanna Be Learned / I Don't Wanna Be Tamed".

I say at least because the back cover of *Ramones Mania* lists "I Just Want to Have Something to Do" as "I just Wanna Have Something to Do," though the CD itself has the title printed correctly. This doesn't even include uses within the lyrics, which would be countless. And though, as previously mentioned, the Ramones would occasionally use the construction "want to" in their titles in place of "wanna" (see songs like "I Just Want to Have Something to Do" or "Merry Christmas (I Don't Want to Fight Tonight)"), they would absolutely not be caught dead using "wanna" as "want a." And "want to" is fine. I'm not calling out Boris the Sprinkler's 2000 song "I Don't Really Want to Walk to Taco Bell Without You." The issue I have is with "(Do You Wanna) Grilled Cheese." So I propose that, at his own expense, Rev. Norb tracks down every copy of *Saucer To Saturn* and the "Do You Wanna Grilled Cheese?" b/w "Bad Guy Reaction" 7" and, in black sharpie marker, crosses off the "ed" from "grilled." Only then will he have made right.

As ever,
Nicky Reynolds

Upon rereading my letter, I noticed that I forgot to use the subjunctive mood in the penultimate sentence. Boy, would I have had egg on my face. It should read:

So I propose that, at his own expense, Rev. Norb track down every copy of *Saucer To Saturn* and the "Do You Wanna Grilled Cheese?" b/w "Bad Guy Reaction" 7" and, in black sharpie marker, cross off the "ed" from "grilled."

I.e. track instead of tracks and cross instead of crosses. If I had forgotten to correct that, surely Norb would have had more than enough ammunition to take me down in his inevitable follow up letter.

Thank you for your interest, and, all goofs aside, all the joy you bring me each month.

As ever,
Nicky

CONTRIBUTE TO MRR

In addition to scene reports, guest columns, and interviews, we're looking for a few specific contributions:

We want some new columnists to write about Hardcore with a capital H, Oi!, DIY metal and garage rock, as well as regular columnists from South and Central America, the UK, and Southeast Asia. For consideration, send a sample column and a list of three topics you'd cover in future columns.

SEX WORK IS REAL WORK

We're collecting perspectives from sex workers around the world for an on-going series of guest columns, 1000–2000 words in length. Discretion guaranteed.

MRR@MAXIMUMROCKNROLL.COM

COLUMNS

FELIX HAVOC
FIN DE SIÈCLE ANGST

I have been spending a lot of time in New York City in recent months. It has changed a lot since I hung out there in the late '80s and early '90s. As young punks and activists, we were ever in awe of the scene in New York. Its bands NAUSEA, BORN AGAINST, CITIZENS ARREST and RORSCHACH were some of the most important in the late '80s and early '90s in reinventing hardcore. They created a new vocabulary and aesthetic of DIY hardcore. Those bands helped to move hardcore from the hands of the original '80s heads, who had mostly moved on to metal or college rock, into the hands of a new generation. This generation was more political, more inclusive, and far less concerned with "making it" or working within established music business norms. Squat or Rot, Slug and Lettuce, and Food Not Bombs gave voice to a more radical, street activist style of hardcore punk. It's hard not to be nostalgic for this era of hardcore and its earnest politics.

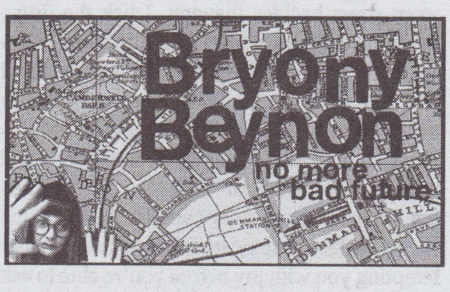
In 1988 I almost moved to NYC, but the city's large and violent skinhead scene, which had ties to the same scene in DC, made me look further afield. In the Midwest, we were enamored with NYC scene, distributing records, doing fanzine interviews and booking touring bands. I used to take the bus to NYC just to hang out for a week or two, catch gigs and shadow Neil and Ralphy and study the operations of Squat or Rot and Tribal War, which were something of a template for what I tried to do when I started a label and distro.

Walking through the neighborhood where ABC No Rio used to be is surreal. I fear this scene has joined the IWW, Suffragettes, and Beatniks in being lost to history in the Lower East Side. But it certainly had an outsized influence in its day.

On a recent trip to NYC, I was fortunate to visit the David Bowie Is exhibit on display at the Brooklyn Museum from now until July. This was a fantastic experience. It is a masterfully curated testament to this individual's creative and artistic spirit. I am a longtime fan of Bowie, and have written of him often in this column. Where would we be if not for his vision? But even if you only know a few radio hits, you will enjoy this immersive experience into this man's music. Bowie could be the coolest guy ever, so don't sleep on this if you are near NYC.

If you live in a hip urban area like New York City with a cold climate you are probably used to seeing thousands of people wearing thee now ubiquitous Canada Goose parka. PETA has mounted a campaign spreading the word that these jackets hoods are trimmed with the fur of coyotes who are hunted expressly for this purpose. One of the things I have been doing a lot of in New York is going to vegan and vegetarian restaurants because there is a much greater variety than we have in the Upper Midwest. It blows my mind how many people come to vegan restaurants wearing fur coats or the Canada Goose jacket with the fur hood. I guess this just demonstrates that being vegan or vegetarian isn't really any kind of alternative lifestyle or statement of a political or ethical nature anymore. In fact, it appears to be about is trendy as buying an expensive parka. It just seems like bad form to wear a fur coat to a vegan restaurant, kind of like wearing a DEICIDE shirt to church or something, but even that you could say was in attempt to shock. But in this case I think it's more indicative of how mainstream something that once had subcultural roots has become.

As I've written about before, I grew up watching '70s science fiction, which has left a major imprint on me. When you start to think about it, we are living in the grim future most of that '70 science fiction was predicting. It just doesn't seem so grim because we are living in it. But much of the dark prophecies about surveillance, social control, artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, robots, and the like are coming true around us. Humans have a great capacity to adjust and adapt and find some happiness in even the worst of surroundings. And so we adapt to the grim dystopian future of our parents' generation with a smile, because surely it's not so bleak as it was painted in Brave New World or THX1138. About a year ago, I woke up screaming from a nightmare, "Fuck you Hal! Fuck You Hal!" My wife shook me awake and wanted to know what was going on. "Who is Hal??" Hal, of course, was Hal9000 from Stanley Kubrick's 2001, and in my nightmare Hal was trying to turn off my life support and I was fighting for my life. While Hal9000 might not be controlling our life support today, if you ask your Amazon Echo to "open the pod bay doors" it will respond "I'm sorry Dave, I can't do that." While I chuckled at this, it also gave me reason to pause. Kubrick was trying to make a point about humans playing god, creating a super-intelligent computer they did not understand and only thought they could control. And today, just such computers are being built. There was an article in this magazine when I was in high school "1984 Has Arrived, and It's User Friendly," and this dynamic is still at play. 1984 came and went without society reaching the kind of totalitarian rule Orwell depicted However, the technology of surveillance, the group thinking, and manipulation of information and history have all manifested themselves in our time. The process only seems normal because we live it day to day, like the proverbial frog in the pot of slowly boiling water. Indeed, we embrace the technology of social control in the form of gadgets and social media. We are living in the bleak future '70s science fiction predicted; we are living in the No Future the '77 punks railed against. It just seems less bleak because we still have the human capacity to make the best of it and just enough freedom to pace around the cage.

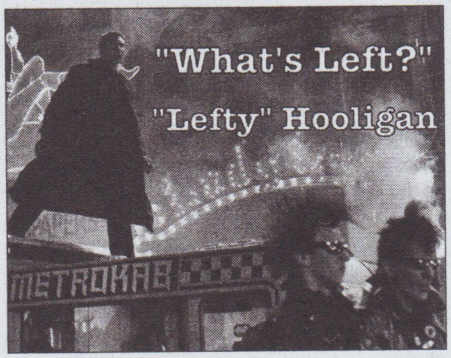


It's summer, it's January, and Grace and I are in the Blue Mountains. These are the halcyon days that you know are happening. Cavorting around in my new-old bright yellow car: Yolanda. We eat inch-thick caramel slices in Bullaburra. We record vocals for our holiday band BRACE BELDEN in a small cupboard. I'm worried that we might get thrown out of the guest house and have to sleep in Yolanda. We don't. The sugar is so intoxicating after a few bites that it is almost sour. Friendship is the ultimate grand gesture wrapped up in a thousand tiny movements.

The next day we meet friends at a clearing at the edge of a cliff, a viewing platform into an enormous green abyss full of blue mist. We swap cars and get a perimeter tour of an abandoned asylum, almost cliché-spooky, and Zephyr points out a series of shacks that were squatted until the '90s, one of them by his uncle, now passed. Back at the precipice, a man appears from the undergrowth. Brushing aside his long dark hair, he says he's been out in the bush for several days, swigging from a bottle of Ouzo with a toothy smile. The deep red scratches across his back would appear to confirm this account; although we are, at most, a fifteen-minute walk from the main road, this illusion of remoteness works for him just as it works for us. He says he's out here because he hates all people. I stiffen suddenly, suspecting we are on the brink of some nihilistic diatribe I'd rather skip, but it doesn't come. Grace and I somehow scoot ourselves over to an outcrop further away. The instinctive retreat from a strange man is obviously our reasoning, but neither of us ever says so. Our easy, unafraid, men, blessed with a lack of paralyzing instincts, do the charming talking. A byproduct of low population density is the Australian's easy way with small talk. He smiles. "I need to learn to be alone so I can be with other people, for my son, you know?' I squint over and notice a tattoo across his chest that reads either 'Bad Decisions" or "No Regrets" in a looping, thin, cursive. I want to be clear that I don't remember which. I think about every time my parents are out walking and manage a chat with a stranger and wonder if I blame my inability for small talk on gendered fear a little more than I should. Maybe there is a way that is through, not around. Maybe I've been away from London long enough to notice my well-worn street hackles thawing. I lick the drips. After the customary offer of a ride and a go on someone's phone charger is politely declined and he's disappeared again, we head back to that road. It's a huge dual carriageway that acts like a smooth artery, cutting through forest and rock. A deep trace of violence that smooths out before you can fully compute how it came to be, safely intoxicated by natural beauty tempting you with joy before you're able to ask what happened here. Even the cicadas are in on this ruse as they amp up their buzz like a white noise app to help you sleep or, indeed, reach any type of lucid conclusion because all you can do is stand amazed and swallowed whole by their glorious, thrumming buzz.

Later in the afternoon we visit Zephyr's mother's house at Glenbrook in the lower mountains. We are greeted by an easy, brilliant woman who seems so profoundly whole I want to fast forward some years and be her slash her best mate. We check out his late father's *Temple ov Psychic Youth* fanzines, learn of wizard accreditation schemes and get tipsy on the special dream magick that you can only get from observing artifacts from a friend's childhood. I briefly pause to think about my own mother and the contours of the wall still between us. I wonder what her liberation could have looked like, whether she feels her best self now, how much of her own hackles, constructed for other reasons during other decades, passed down to her daughters with precise instruction, are now thawed. Someone points out a huge lizard in the garden, then he's gone again. The thought passes as we cruise onwards through the thick sunlit forest to the Jellybean Pool. Our bellies slide over smooth rocks. We see a St. Andrews Cross spider sunbathing just above the water's surface. A fatal animal named from the bible, unaware of their given names, stay lounging like a blissed out crucifix. We listen to NORMIL HAWAIIANS in the car and rocket along between the eucalypts, narrowly avoiding potholes, appraising absent friends. Ten kilometres stretches out across an hour just to save the car's axles, and finally we reach Red Hands Cave. One of our party has decided to do the short but steep journey down to the foot of the valley barefoot. Australians. There are two ways in which the Darug people marked their hands here—either by pressing one into the dark red mud and printing it onto the surface of the wall in front, or by chewing then spitting across an outstretched arm, inverted ochre marking the space where the hand was not. The object and the space around it being given equal weight in the shady business we call representation seems fundamental. The stencil and the painting. The painted wall and the painted hand. Each print gleams out behind rusty metal bars, campaigned for by local Indigenous rangers to protect the prints from the scourge of vandalism. The prints are between 500 and 1600 years old. I wonder about a thousand years ago, and I wonder about those who graffitied here, their lives and times, too. The tourism notice affixed to the cage offers some blurb about "aborigines," a word now solely the preserve of dog-whistle racists, and so of course as common as ever depending on the papers you read.

The *big bad truth* about Australia hangs in the air like a poison gas. The sickness only comes once start to know what you're smelling. The denial stings your snout too, like a secondary nausea; a bed sore on a tumor. Went to the doctor, he said "I don't know what you mean, mate, your country's picture of health, mate, I mean, look at all these buildings, you've never been fitter, mate! Here's a perfume, two sprays morning and night and you'll never feel un-fragrant again!" You follow doc's orders because you trust the authority of your liberal democracy so much that you don't even mind being forced to vote, and god knows you can't risk catching *the shame*. What if it starts to compress and then slowly crush every bone in your body and the body that birthed you and each and every body that's gone before, even those already sleeping forever, still stealing dirt to help decay their corpses? Nah, can't be risking that. With some time and daily sprays, pretty soon you stop choking every time you leave the house. There are ways to cleanse one's conscience whilst inhaling all these fumes. This is the land of the "fair go" after all, mate. Maybe you'll even learn how to acknowledge country, recite the names of the dispossessed nations, reeling it off before work meetings like you're announcing the winners of a raffle. Perhaps, between gulps of the perfume, you'll even start making pronouncements on appropriate policy, referring solemnly to "*our* first nations people," casually wielding that paternal possessive as though you bought some humans who live in your shed. (Luckily for you, enough historical documents have been burnt that you'll never need discover that your grandparents actually bought humans, didn't even offer the shed.) No one can tell which is the gas and which is the perfume anymore, but you learn fast not to derail a pub conversation to try and figure that one out, just allow the miasma to penetrate every waking second until you pass out from ten schooners of piss. A mystery lost to time, eh mate?



Dans une société qui a aboli toute aventure, la seule aventure qui reste est celle d'abolir la société.
graffito, Paris, 1968

By the time I turned sixteen, I knew. But I'd suspected it all my life. I won't claim I was "born this way," although I've had overwhelming urges as long as I can remember. At the time, in 1968, the status quo was being challenged everywhere. So better blatant than latent, I always said.

I'm an ultraleftist.

I had a bad attitude toward authority long before I declared myself a radical at sixteen in 1968, when the whole world was exploding politically, culturally, and socially. I've told the story of finding my politics, and of evolving from anarchism through left communism to my current left of the Left agnosticism, way too often. In addition to my visceral anti-authoritarianism, I was sympathetic to the underdog, empathetic toward the oppressed, angry over injustice, and always itching for a fight. I identified with the Left, but I felt the conventional Left was insufficiently aggressive and too ready to compromise. I can't count the times I've been called too radical, far Left, hard Left, infantile Left, or ultraleft, and seriously advised to tone down or back off my politics. I've had liberal Democrats wave Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Trotskyists brandish Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, all the while screaming insults at me. I've been called a communist by the liberals and, most telling, an adventurist and objective counterrevolutionary by the Trots.

Lenin's polemic is occasionally translated as *Ultraleftism: An Infantile Disease*, hence the common epithet. His vitriol in 1920 was reserved for the Dutch and German Left (the Council Communists) and the Italian Left (followers of Bordiga) for rejecting any participation in reformist working class politics. To the claim by ultras that the uprising of workers' and soldiers' Soviets had made parliamentarianism obsolete, Lenin wrote that parliament can still "be used as a platform for revolutionary socialist propaganda." To the call by ultras to abandon reformist trade unionism for immaculate revolutionary unions, Lenin argued that revolutionaries should remain in the unions to expose the opportunism and social chauvinism of their leaders while converting their reformist fellow workers to revolutionary politics. To the demand by ultras for "no compromise" in theory and practice, Lenin insisted that revolutionaries needed to know "how to retreat properly" and therefore how to effectively compromise in order to survive. These "mistakes" by ultraleftism invariably lead to adventurism according to Lenin, producing reckless or impetuous actions, methods, or policies, especially in political or international undertakings.

Yet what makes parliamentarianism obsolete, what exposes trade unionism as reformist, and what reveals itself as uncompromising is the revolutionary situation itself. The revolutionary moment—from mass uprising to social revolution—is in practice ultraleft. It is invariably spontaneous, politically variegated and broad-based; frequently expressed through similar organizational forms like autonomous collectives, councils and communes; and everywhere surprising and outflanking the powers-that-be and the vanguard parties that hoped to suppress or control it. The historical high points to this ultraleftism are numerous, if often brief—the Paris Commune, 1871; Russia, 1905; Mexico, 1910–19; Russia, 1917–21; Ukraine, 1918–21; Germany, 1918–19, Bavaria, 1918–19; Northern Italy, 1918–21; Kronstadt, 1921; Shanghai, 1927; Spain, 1936–39; Germany, 1953; Hungary 1956; Shanghai, 1967; France, 1968; Czechoslovakia, 1968; Poland, 1970–71; Portugal, 1974; Angola, 1974; Poland, 1980–81; Argentina, 2001–02. From Luxemburg's *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions* to Mattick's *Anti-Bolshevik Communism* and Dauvé's *Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement*, this revolutionary situation, this ultraleftism in practice has been exalted as the *sine qua non* of socialism. Equally obvious is that historically, the nemesis of this ultraleftism has been the Leninist vanguard party.

The *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin* runs to 54 volumes and roughly 35,000 pages of political writings, studies, polemics, notes, and letters in the original Russian. Yet, with the exception of his explicitly philosophical work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, Lenin wrote almost exclusively about Bolshevik party politics and practice. From *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, in which he outlined the circumstances which resulted in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party's split between a Bolshevik ("majority") faction led by himself and a Menshevik ("minority") faction led by Martov, to *The State and Revolution*, his greatest contribution to political theory, which arose from arguments with fellow Bolshevik Bukharin, Lenin related everything he wrote back to the Bolsheviks. Lenin was obsessed with defining the vanguard party's "scientifically correct" theory and practice, strategy and tactics, even process and procedure. For Lenin, the Bolshevik party was "the way and the truth and the life," and no one came to The Socialist Revolution except through the Bolshevik party.

I've talked about Leninism's delusion of "scientific socialism" as well as its quasi-religious illusions in a previous column on sectarianism (*MRR* #408). Now I'd like to point out a simple fact, so simple that it should be couched as an aphorism: "One person's moderate is another person's ultraleftist." Liberals consider socialists too far to the left while socialists label communists hard Left. As mentioned above, Lenin himself coined the slur "infantile Leftist" for Bordiga and the Councilists he considered left-wing communists. In turn, Stalinists disparage both Trotskyists and Maoists as ultraleft, while Trotskyists and Maoists trade this insult between and among themselves. And everybody denounces anarchists as too far left.

Which is how anti-fascist protests and violence are deemed by most on the Left today. Black bloc tactics and antifa strategies in particular have become the subject of scorn and condemnation by the usual suspects: Adam Proctor of Dead Pundits Society and Democratic Socialists of America, Connor Kilpatrick of *Jacobin*, Sherry Wolf and Derek Wright of the International Socialist Organization, and Left academics from Freddie deBoer to Noam Chomsky. Whether rehashing Lenin's tired old insults or bemoaning how black bloc tactics and antifa strategies hurt the Left, embolden the Right, and give the state an excuse to suppress political activity, this is clearly a battle to be fought in the streets as well as in academia and on social media. This piling on of the Left onto the Left of the Left, in turn, has permitted a bizarre entryism into left wing politics for former Leftists who have secretly become right wingers.

In "Invasion of the Entryists," George Monbiot describes one such clandestine shift from Left to Right in excruciating detail. The ultra-sectarian British Trotskyist splinter groupuscule, the Revolutionary Communist Party, went from physically attacking competing oppositionist groups and movements in order to destroy them to founding a journal, *Living Marxism*, that covertly embraced pro-corporate libertarian right wing politics. *LM* eventually became *Sp!ked*, which still retains its crypto-Libertarianism under the guise of so-called libertarian Marxism. The *Sp!ked* cadre (Brendan O'Neill, James Heartfield, Michael Fitzpatrick, Patrick West, Frank Furedi, *et al*), their fronts (among them the Institute of Ideas think tank), and their fellow travelers (Lee Fang of *The Intercept*, pop journalist Angela Nagle) continue to infiltrate right wing politics into the Left with constant warnings against the ultraleft, without much opposition or even awareness.

My solution to sorting out who's ultraleft is to promote a diversity of tactics on the Left and let the success of their respective practices be our guide. Beginning with Malcolm X ("Our people have made the mistake of confusing the methods with the objectives. As long as we agree on objectives, we should never fall out with each other just because we believe in different methods or tactics or strategy to reach a common goal.") and concluding with Howard Zinn ("Each situation in the world is unique and requires unique combinations of tactics. I insist only that the question is so open, so complex, that it would be foolish to rule out at the start, for all times and conditions, all of the vast range of possible tactics beyond strict nonviolence.") a diversity of tactics is essential. The mass insurrections and social revolutions extolled above are historical examples of a diversity of tactics in practice, as are the suffragist, labor, civil rights, and anti-Vietnam war movements. Arguments over diversity of tactics, begun in 1999 during the anti-WTO battle of Seattle and continuing through Occupy Wall Street, need to transcend the Leftist debating society and take matters into the streets.

Or as we say in punk rock, see you in the pit!

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA

Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com
Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
Website aggregator: gamatiasz.com
Publishing website: 62milepress.com
Facebook profile: facebook.com/georgematiasz
Facebook writer page: facebook.com/gamatiasz
Personal Instagram: @gamatiasz
Book Instagram: @onepercentfree

OVERAMPED
HARM REDUCTION FOR THE MODERN WORLD

Supervised Consumption Sites: A Love Letter

In this issue of *America Ignores Simple Life-saving Solutions to Public Health Emergencies*, we're discussing supervised consumption sites. These are sanctioned facilities where people can use pre-obtained drugs under medical supervision. There's lots of different models for how these sites function. Some of them are integrated with other health and substance use services. Other sites function as stand-alone venues where people can come take care of their shit and then take off. There are other places that do this in a mobile unit as well, like in Montréal, though they can't see quite as many people as a fixed site. The most important thing that they all have in common is that they offer safer injection supplies and they are overseen by staff or volunteers, often medical professionals. These people can supervise people's injection practices, offer guidance on how to make it safer, respond to overdoses, provide referrals and health navigation, and sometimes treat and prescribe. Currently, there are no legal sites in the US.

It's tough to find the right shorthand for communicating this model. You may have heard about supervised injection facilities, or SIFs, in the news, but there are a lot of different terms and acronyms for the same idea. You got your safe or supervised consumption sites (SCS), safe injection sites (SIS), medically supervised injection centers, drug consumption spaces, fixer-rooms, and several other variations on this theme. We harm reductionists need to get on top of our branding. In the US, the conversation is leaning towards SIFs. Though it doesn't quite role off the tongue, I prefer SCS. Here's why:

The average injecting drug user in the US is white—a white man, actually. It has been this way for many years now. There are a lot of racially problematic aspects about the public health approach to opioid use in recent years. Now that white men are the primary victims of opioid overdoses, there is a sympathetic, medically-focused tone when talking about the "disease of addiction." But where was this compassion in the '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s when Black communities were ravaged by heroin and crack? Back then, people were sent to jail by the cops, not to detox.

In addition to the medical benefits that supervised consumption sites offer, there's also an element of legal protection. Users are sheltered from police harassment and won't be arrested for drug possession. But to make a sweeping generalization, people of color are more likely to smoke their drugs of choice. Black and brown people need to be offered the same level of legal protection and the same quality of health interventions that white injectors are now enjoying. Safe consumption sites also offer designated smoking spaces, which is an important distinction from a SIF. Sites dedicated for injection only could actually perpetuate the racialized impacts of the war on drugs. So SCS it is.

Most overdoses can be reversed if a rescuer responds with Narcan in time. The overwhelming majority of fatal overdoses occur when a person is using alone. Every day, dozens of people are dying alone locked in bathroom stalls, in their bedrooms, in their tents, on the street. The supervised consumption model would go far in addressing the overdose epidemic because there's always somewhere to go and there's always someone waiting to revive you if you should you go out. It also means that people have clean surfaces, safe supplies, and the most valuable resource: time. Since it's (regrettably) still illegal to possess drugs in the US, people are forced into clandestine spaces. They have to rush to get their fix, using whatever supplies they have on hand, sometimes having to resort to stream, river, or puddle water to inject. There's just no way to keep a sterile environment going out in the street. And oftentimes you don't have time to try to find the best vein so people end up missing their shots and are more likely to get abscesses, infections, etc. This is partly why it's so laughable that people think drug users won't use drugs if there's nowhere to use them.

But, as we've established, acknowledging that people use drugs is a tough pill for America to swallow. There's a lot of shock and outrage around the notion that people who use drugs are people (your sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, neighbors, lovers, enemies, revered celebrities, elected officials, etc.) and they deserve to stay safe and for fuck's sake to not *die*. But *endorsing* this type of behavior is simply too controversial to even utter, so instead we do nothing and watch the fatalities roll in.

The dense *moral majority* fog that has blanketed the US in recent years could not be more divergent from A) common sense and B) basic human compassion that informs policies throughout the majority of the industrialized world. There are over 66 cities throughout the world that have at least one SCS, and they aren't new. The Netherlands was the first to officially sanction this model. In the '70s and '80s it started as a small, mostly unofficial tolerance of drug use in certain facilities like methadone clinics. Switzerland came aboard in the '80s, and the movement to establish drug consumption rooms ramped up as the AIDS crisis advanced throughout the mid-late '80s. The harm reduction ethos bloomed in tandem and spread throughout the continent. The more progressive European administrations began to concede to the radical admission that "abstinence only" drug policy wasn't working and started to fund sites for drug injectors. There are now more than 90 officially sanctioned sites throughout the world including Portugal, Germany, Canada, Australia, Spain, Denmark, and Greece, among others.

It's hard for me to try to put myself in the mindset of someone opposed to having these sites in the US because it makes so much damn sense, but opponents say that it will promote drug use or that it will have a negative impact on the community. And like every other pragmatic public health approach, there's tons of evidence to the contrary. This model has been *meticulously* studied and evaluated throughout the decades. Two of the sites that have been evaluated the most are Insite in Vancouver, Canada and The Uniting Sydney MSIC in Kings Cross, Australia.

Just to make sure this dead horse is sufficiently beaten, we are in the midst of an absolute, unequivocal, categorical, unambiguous, public health crisis. More people are dying of opioid overdoses in the US than at the height of the AIDS epidemic. According to *Stat Magazine*, the overdose death rate is so prolific that it's likely the cause of the decline in average life expectancy. For the first time in over half a century, life expectancy in the US decreased two years in a row. *Yet*, out of the many millions of injections that have been supervised in one of these sites in the past 25 years there has not been a *single* overdose-related fatality in any of these sites. There's also data that shows SCS reduce overall overdose rates.

How do supervised consumption sites reduce HIV?

Estimates vary, but Insite is estimated to prevent up to 84 new HIV infections per year. Do you know how expensive it is for the government to pay for decades of HIV treatment? It's huge. People can come to a place to get new supplies, and aren't rushed to get in and get out to get their fix. Most of the supervised sites are opened significantly longer than needle exchange programs in the states, often all night and on the weekends. People have nearly unfettered access to needles and other safer injection supplies and they're less likely to have to share supplies. I'm not getting more in depth on this point, it's a no-brainer.

What about infection and general morbidity?

According to a study published in the Canadian Journal of Medicine, when holding all other variables constant, use of Insite was shown to reduce needling sharing, outdoor injecting and increased the use of clean water for injection, cooking and filtering drugs prior to injection, and injecting in a clean location. All of these results were statistically significant.

Mortality?

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction found that German consumption rooms prevented more than ten overdose deaths per year. In Insite's first two years, the overdose death rate in the surrounding area fell by 35% vs. 9.3% in the rest of Vancouver. At Uniting MSIC, overdose-related ambulance calls declined by 80% between the three years before the site opened and five years after its opening. It declined 60% in the rest of the city, but it's still significant.

Do supervised consumption sites increase drug use?

A study of 1,031 participants of Insite commissioned by St. John's Hospital in Vancouver demonstrated that while controlling for all other factors, regular use of Insite had a positive association with enrollment to drug treatment programs. Drug treatment enrollment was positively associated with injection cessation. So by the transitive property of... math...people who injected at Insite decreased or ceased injection drug use as compared to people who did not use the site.

But aren't they recruiting new drug users and teaching people to shoot up?

No. Many of the existing sites around the world will not admit people who are not already established injectors. If you are already using, they'll teach you to perfect your craft, but if you haven't injected previously, you'll be referred elsewhere.

But won't it be expensive?

An independent business consulting firm did some complicated mathematical evaluation to find that Sydney's MSIC resulted in saving the government $87.5 million per year, almost 32 times the amount it costs to run the site per year. Averted HIV and HCV cases, reduction in ambulance and hospital visits, the list goes on. So, no.

But won't it increase crime rates in the neighborhoods where they are located?

There's no evidence of the crime rate going up once an SCS comes to town. A 2005 client survey conducted by Uniting MSIC found that 78% of people who used the site would be injecting in public if they didn't have the site. The study estimates that that would pan out to 191,673 acts of public injection prevented since the sites inception in 2001. Several studies have also found a reduction in discarded needles in communities that host an SCS.

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But, despite all of the evidence, there are several state and federal laws that would prohibit safe consumption sites. The federal laws are a little more sticky though. The Controlled Substances Act precludes safe consumption sites by prohibiting possession and distribution of drugs. But in addition, there's a federal statute affectionately referred to as the "Crack House Statute," part of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which states that no person may "knowingly open or maintain...[or] manage or control any place...for the purpose of unlawfully...using a controlled substance."

Activists around the country have been trying to navigate around these laws from different angles and are actually making inroads in local and state government. The cities of Seattle and Philadelphia passed ordinances this year to say that they will support a safe consumption site. States do have the power to establish public health laws in the interest of their constituents, but if these laws are at odds with the federal government then one of two things can happen: the federal government can choose not to authorize resources toward prosecuting states. This is why marijuana can be used recreationally in a few states, but not considered legal by Washington. Kind of a *look-the-other-way* approach. However, the subhumans occupying the White House have said that they would absolutely prosecute the shit out of anyone who attempts to start an SCS. In fact, this is what Jeff Sessions is trying to do with marijuana right now. It doesn't seem like he has a ton of support or resources to effectively carry it out, but if this is how these prudes think about weed, imagine what they would do with heroin. Trump is publicly praising Duterte (remember him?) for genociding drug users.

If some states pass laws to permit these places, the federal government could come in and arrest clients for drug possession, staff could be arrested under the Crack House Statute and / or risk losing their medical licenses. Activists are exploring legal avenues to challenge these laws and their purview over safe consumption sites. There's a ton of dedicated people working to bring safe consumption sites to the US, and I, for once, am hopeful that the tides are turning. Here's to the future.

HMU @ dearauntiehazel@gmail.com

Special shout out to Robbie and his crew in Dayton, Ohio. Thanks for reading.

MOM, LOOK, I'M IN A MAGAZINE!!
GUEST COLUMN
SEX PISTOL
A
B
C

LESSON 2: HABITS AREN'T PUNK

I believe in habits. By that I mean I believe humans are drawn toward repetition as a form of comfort. Which then means I've been a smoker for the last ten years (bad for the vocal cords, I know) and open my window blinds every morning. If there is fear of the unknown, then imagine what kind of joy can be found when the known it is played out again and again.

When I first started taking voice lessons, I told only two friends. It wasn't necessarily because I was embarrassed but because I didn't have the answer to what would become one of the more common follow up questions—what do I want to do with the lessons?

Truth be told, I dream of starting the punk band I never did as a teenager. But more realistically, I want to have something to look forward to as a part of my routine that doesn't revolve around survival. Growing up without a fully developed spinal cord, all of the habits I have been forced to form come back to my health—and the stakes for those are much higher. These habits change and I have to re-train myself in order to guarantee a functioning body that I have no way of knowing will last. When I started singing lessons, I wanted a habit that would get me outside of myself.

My second lesson with Annie was about air. Controlling the air and increasing volume, creating a "single air column." It's about then that I realized I wasn't going to get very far outside of myself when I was literally learning to control the air inside of me. I understood the concepts that Annie was expressing, but I was having a hard time visualising the air. In my mind, it needed to be something I could hold onto in order to control it. A string to pull out of my diaphragm like a talking doll.

The thing about habits is that they become a part of you. We know the science: your mind changes when new habits, for better or worse, are formed. But what if the forming of a habit is like the forming of a relationship? I'm not a neuroscientist, but my understanding from an initial Google search after I had this hunch is that the same area of the brain, the basal ganglia, is associated with both habit forming and falling in love. If you surround yourself with a stimulus enough times and in certain ways, your mind will have a learned response to them.

The intention is required to begin a relationship, but at some point, as you become comfortable with a person, your interactions with them become as familiar as a well-worn habit. But relationships can change, a person can change. And in order to maintain that, you have to adjust your expectation. A habit is less forgiving. But in the beginning, it's the same. The intention is required, the excitement, the unsureness, the desire to commit. And over time, they become a familiar part of your psyche.

Singing feels like an exercise in unconscious control. Learning how to control something my body is doing without having to spend too much mental energy on it, in order for all the pieces to come together at once. What has fascinated me the most about singing is that it's all actions that the body mostly had the capacity for but require the training in place to trigger the reactions needed. The expectations I have of my body are changing as I hold onto the lessons in my head. I have spent a lifetime building a series of habits around my health and my body, and the expectations I have around what I hope my body can do changes with them. There are ways of feeling comfortable in my body that I didn't know were possible until the introduction of these routines. A lot of them are encouraging movements that are otherwise natural, but require a conscious effort on my part to try and make them happen.

During the second lesson with Annie, she asked me to close my eyes, forget about a pitch, and push the air toward the wall as if I was trying to hit it. I took a deep breath, had no idea what I was doing, and afterwards with my eyes still closed, I heard Annie say "you did it." And that was the end of the lesson. I'm still not sure what exactly it was that I did.

Recently I went to see SHOPPING play, and they said "if you ever wanted to start a band, just do it. It's so much fun." I felt reassured and inspired, knowing that we're all just trying to form something out of nothing. Building habits is a display of our relationships with ourselves as we relate to the world around us. After this second lesson, I feel connected to myself in a way that is more forgiving while also being more motivated.

futures
and
pasts
*erika elizabeth

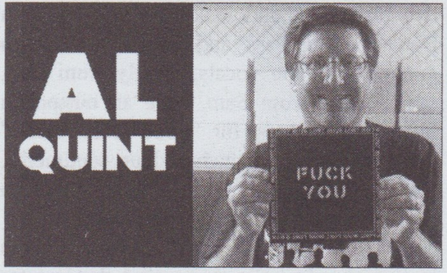
I wrote about the debut cassette from Melbourne's the SHIFTERS in the very first column that I did for *MRR* three years ago, which gives me all sorts of complicated and confusing feelings about the passage of time. And, as evidence that sometimes it takes a while for historical wrongs to be righted, that criminally limited tape is now finally available in its entirety as an LP on the new French label Future Folklore, following the two songs that resurfaced on the *Creggan Shops* 7" courtesy of It Takes Two back in 2016. The SHIFTERS' stark, repetitive minimalism and shambolic charms always owed more than a little bit to the FALL in their early years, and revisiting the material from the cassette now, just a few months after Mark E. Smith's passing, only reinforces the psychic connection between the lackadaisical post-punk twang in "Captain Hindsight" and the cracked melodies of something like the FALL's "Your Heart Out" from the *Dragnet* era. "Creggan Shops" is as close to a contemporary successor to those brilliant first two MEKONS singles as I've come across, from the tense interplay between the melodica and a creaky violin, to the scritch-scratch guitar, to the nonchalantly harmonized dual vocals, all sounding like they're perpetually on the verge of coming undone. There's way more at play here than blatant UK DIY worship, though—it's not a huge jump from the homespun, pastoral pop of '80s Australian DIY legends like the PARTICLES and the CANNANES to the SHIFTERS' raggedly melodic "Colour Me In," and "The American Attitude to the Law" sprawls into a lengthy VELVET UNDERGROUND-addled haze, if only LOU REED had written songs referencing "*drinking cough syrup to fall asleep*" instead of heroin. One of the best releases of 2015 when it first came out on cassette, and this vinyl version is definitely going to be tough to top in 2018. (Future Folklore, futurefolklorerecords.bandcamp.com)

YOUR FOOD were an early '80s quartet from Louisville, Kentucky whose off-kilter, stripped-down art-punk mirrored the similarly self-styled approach of other DIY groups from that era who existed outside of major cities. Their only proper recorded output, 1983's self-released *Poke It With A Stick* LP, was just reissued by Drag City at the behest of fellow Louisvillian David Grubbs (formerly of SQUIRREL BAIT and BASTRO, among others), and it's pretty essential stuff for anyone interested in the chapter of American weirdo post-punk that took shape just before "college rock" became the dominant underground cultural force in the mid-to-late '80s. "Leave" and "New Pop" both layer simple, endlessly repeated basslines, obliquely narrated vocals, and trebly stabs of guitar into spartan drones that share the jaggedly danceable sensibility of what was happening a couple of hours to the south in Athens, Georgia with bands like the METHOD ACTORS or PYLON, even though YOUR FOOD were way more likely to switch up to a frantic, thrashy punk fit at a moment's notice (see the last 30 or so seconds of the otherwise choppy and COME ON-esque "Cool / Cowtown"). There's a sharp-cornered, chaotic shamble to "Here" that isn't too far removed from RED KRAYOLA's late '70s post-punk incarnation, and there's even some touches of UK DIY-style naive jangle in "Corners" before it collapses into noisy abstract guitar squall mid-song. Totally freewheeling and ramshackle bent-punk bliss! I've seen a few references to the fact that *MRR* "refused" to review the LP when it originally came out, so hopefully I'm doing some small justice to *Poke It With A Stick* here 35 years later. (Drag City, dragcity.com)

I'm most certainly a card-carrying member of the Flying Nun fan club, but I'm also always really happy to see some renewed attention being given to some of the darker and more obscure corners of the late '70s and early '80s New Zealand underground, beyond the Flying Nun roster and the bands typically associated with the whole storied Dunedin sound. NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS have often (and rather unfairly) been termed the Kiwi JOY DIVISION thanks to the combination of some deeply propulsive basslines and Peter Jefferies' dramatically icy baritone vocals, but you could just as easily connect the dots between their take on bleak and razor-edged post-punk and what dozens of other UK-based bands like the SOUND or the CHAMELEONS were doing more or less concurrently. The two 12" EPs and one single that they released before splitting up in 1983 have been impossibly difficult to track down for quite a while (at non-collector scum prices, at least), and the consolation prize has been a selection of songs from those releases that made it onto a 1995 CD-only collection called *Nerve Ends in Power Lines*, plus a handful of roughly recorded 1981 demos that were excavated for 1998's *Worldview* 7". After all of the recent vinyl reissue campaigns focused on long out-of-print records by some of the most beloved New Zealand groups (who generally happened to be backed by Flying Nun in their day), NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS have been long overdue for a similarly comprehensive treatment, so endless appreciation is due to Dais Records for stepping up to remedy that situation with the new *Complete Studio Recordings* anthology, collecting every song from the three original releases on one remastered LP. Even at their darkest and most desperate, like on the sinister, industrial-decay clang of "Another Year," NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS never slipped into the sort of over-the-top goth pretensions that were de rigueur in the age of 4AD's ascendency, and vocal delivery aside, the slashing and anthemic "In Purgatory" honestly has more in common with MISSION OF BURMA or HÜSKER DÜ than, say, BAUHAUS. Highest possible recommendation, and an excellent counterpart to Superior Viaduct's recent reissues of Peter and Graeme Jefferies' more avant-garde / experimental post-NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS project THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT. (Dais Records, nocturnalprojections.bandcamp.com)

TRASH ROMEO are a very new duo from here in Portland featuring two people who have been in most of my favorite local bands over the last couple of years, including GOLDEN HOUR, the BEDROOMS, and CONDITIONER. Everything about their debut cassette *Moving in the Summer* brings to mind the pre-internet, early-to-mid '90s romance of mail-ordering singles from paper catalogs and building up imagined realities of geographically-centered scenes that you'd only ever read about. Alex and Danny both rotate between guitar, drums, and vocals, crafting sparse crash-pop with a hint of basement punk snarl that picks up a few loose threads from the parallel Riot Grrrl-adjacent musical universes of Olympia and Washington D.C. The haunting opener "Cheryl Blossom" juxtaposes delicate-yet-tangled melodies with some darkly angular AUTOCLAVE / SLANT 6 flashes, and sugary sweet TIGER TRAP-style harmonies are at the center of "Night Terror," while "Teen Vogue" recalls the raw, minimalist lo-fi punk of EXCUSE 17 or even KICKING GIANT at their most raucous. Simple, direct, and deeply personal anthems for loners and outcasts everywhere. TRASH ROMEO definitely make me feel a major nostalgia for some of the formative reference points in my young teenage musical upbringing in the 1990s, but it never seems like they're simply reproducing specific cultural signifiers from the past in a modern context—in 2018, you could say it's the difference between posting digital scans of pages from an 1992 issue of *Sassy* magazine on your blog, or choosing to make your own zine with only a typewriter, a glue stick and a photocopier at your disposal. Also worth mentioning: their first show was their tour kick-off show and they were the only band that played it, which just might be one of the most amazing and punkest moves I've encountered in a long time. (trashromeo.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.



IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY, UH, THIS MONTH…

No, I'm not going to write about the BEATLES' *Sgt. Pepper,* which is perhaps the most overrated album of all time. Their record label thought they were being clever by putting it out on CD on June 1, 1987, the twentieth anniversary of its release. Last year was the 50th anniversary of it and guess what? It's *still* overrated. Not as bad as the film version of *Sgt. Pepper,* which was released 40 years ago next month. If you never saw it, be *very* grateful. I suffered through it and I still haven't forgiven the guy who dragged me to it. It uses the lyrical themes of the album and the main roles were played by the members of the BEE GEES and PETER FRAMPTON. I don't think I want to talk about it anymore.

But it was twenty years ago this month, on June 23, 1998, that DILLINGER FOUR's *Midwestern Songs of the Americas* was released on Hopeless Records (hopelessrecords.com), and I still listen to it pretty frequently. It's been a mainstay on my radio show's playlist since I started doing it a few years after its release. It's one of my favorite albums of the past two decades. One of my all-time favorites, period.

As tired as I've grown of pop punk or melodic punk, that album stands the test of time. That's because there's nothing soft about it. It's not squishy or saccharine-sounding. It has a full-bodied grittiness (if that makes sense). Gigantic bass chords pulverize the hooks home, accompanied by a thick, fuzz-ready guitar sound, raspy / sweet vocal tradeoffs and a sharp lyrical eye. D4 were viewing the decay of America and attempting to cope with life on a personal level. The lyrics aren't shouted slogans or tiresome clichés, but it's hard to miss the point. It's more of a first-person, observational approach, as with the bus ride to work that's the topic of "Super Powers Enable Me to Blend In With Machinery." It's about listening to a woman lament how much nicer the buses used to be and also stating *"the only good boss is one that's dead."* Then there's the irresistible chorus of *"fuck 'em all…fuck 'em all!"* In an interview I did, bassist / vocalist Paddy Costello said that song's based on a true story, from when he rode the bus. He said those were the exact quotes.

I've mentioned the closing track, "The Great American Going Out of Business Sale," many times over the years, and how the lyrics nearly bring tears to my eyes because they are so fucking *spot-on* about this country's foibles and pure cruelty—*"three cheers for cruel tradition"*…and concluding with a not-going-to-take-it-anymore sentiment—*"because I've had enough of all this shit about making do, playing ball, the way things are and dealing with it."* Chafing against the yoke of an oppressive system, a pure expression of frustration.

And, as angry as the lyrics can be, as impassioned as the delivery is, there's still a joyousness. Songs like "O.K. F.M. D.O.A.," "Portrait Of The Artist As A Fucking Asshole" and "Doublewhiskeycokenoice" are about chasing the blues away with communal get-togethers, while telling the assholes and co-opters to take a hike. The band's live sets often erupted into celebrations of drunkenness and nudity. There weren't any speeches, just humor. The closest thing I ever saw to a political statement was when Paddy introduced "Holy Shit" (from their singles collection *This Shit Is Genius*) by saying, "this is about how there is absolutely, positively is no God…and it's also about my ass." They were more likely to make prank calls from the stage, to people like Fat Mike and former BOSTON drummer Sib Hashian (R.I.P.), whose number they may or may not have gotten from the person writing this column.

There were three studio albums after *Midwestern Songs*, plus a live album and the aforementioned *This Shit Is Genius*. While the studio albums—*Versus God* (2000), *Situationist Comedy* (2002) and *Civil War* (2008)—all had their moments, none have come close to this one. It’s been a decade since the last album and two decades since *Midwestern Songs*. Maybe it’s time for *Midwestern Songs II*. There’s certainly no shortage of things to sing about these days—times are much worse—and I’d love to hear their take.

NOISE, NOISE AND MORE NOISE… SECT MARK dish out relentless noisy hardcore on their *Worship* 12”. It’s driven by killplow bass and burning guitar mangling, along with echo-laden vocal howlings. They’re from Italy, and it comes across like a mix of their native thrash forebears and Japanese-style hardcore. “Scouts” provides a slightly slower, thumping change of pace, although it mows down everything in its path. Flat out nasty, a fusillade of musical hell being unleashed. And it leaves you wanting more. (Iron Lung, ironlungrecords.bigcartel.com)

CLUSTERFUCK’s *The War of Ideas* was released in mid-2016 (I just got it recently, though), right before that dark day in November and maybe the war of ideas has been lost since then. CLUSTERFUCK reconvene from different parts of the country every few years—they’ve been doing the band since 2003—and this was actually their first 12” since 2009. More spirited and tuneful hardcore with a good amount of sarcasm and absurdism in the lyrics. Not overtly political, reading more as prose than any sort of standard verse / chorus / verse structure. At times, it comes across like a less-frenetic FLAG OF DEMOCRACY, i.e. there doesn’t seem to be as much caffeine involved. Donny’s vocal range goes from hyper to soothing and the brief compositions showcase solid chops that navigate through the high energy songs—fifteen of ’em in a bit over fourteen minutes. Ideas are a potent weapon in Clusterfuck’s hands, although you have to read between the lines a bit. The music is equally potent. (clusterfuck.computer)

Japanese band M.A.Z.E. conjure up some jittery post-punk / garage minimalism on their self-titled demo and it’s done in glorious, trebly low fidelity. The brittle guitar lines sometimes have a nearly-traditional Japanese feel, but you get the feeling they listen to more KLEENEX than shamisen records. For “Spread The Girmicide,” it’s a funkier arrangement, while “Pain In The Gum” is a sprightly frolic. Their previous demo had more of a poppy approach and, while there are some hooks, these songs sound edgier and rougher. (abnormalbroadcasting.bandcamp.com)

NEGATIVE SPACE’s *Gestalt* album probably should have been in my top ten last year. Classic post-punk inspirations. They’re not really sons of GANG OF FOUR, although it’s not a stretch to say they’ve probably listened to that band and WIRE. Piercing guitar lines that also flame like embers at times, along with rhythmic perfection. interlocked and intertwined to create a gyrating whole. The basslines on this album are massive. The vocals are emotional, but it’s borne from anger, not lamentation, although the lyrics exude a dark-soul desperation. This culminates with the deliberate, brooding tension of “Payday Loan,” which builds to a noisy conclusion, before going into the driving punk of “Without Jealousy.” I like these guys for the same reasons I like MOD VIGIL and RANK/XEROX. There are nods to the past, but it’s given a powerful updating. (Drunken Sailor, drunkensailorrecords.co.uk; Always Restrictions, alwaysrestrictions.com)

OPTION are a new Boston band with members of NO SIR I WON’T, BRAIN KILLER, INNOCENT, PURGATORY and others and their *The Hour of Action* demo is one hell of a debut. Buzzing, burning CRASS / SUBHUMANS-inspired anarcho punk delivered with incredible precision and passion. Max sounds like he’s playing two drum kits and locks in perfectly with Dan’s nimble bass and Sam’s razor-sharp guitar lines. The vocals, mostly from Dan, occasionally from Sam, have an outspoken fervor, particularly for “Four More Years.” Even with the somewhat dour sentiments, there’s still a musical uplift. This should be on vinyl. (anotheroption.bandcamp.com)

CYBERPLASM’s *What Is Flesh?* demo features heady noise-mongering that creates a buzz-stun effect. CHROME and METAL URBAIN figure into the equation, with drill-press guitar and mechanized rhythms infused with punk speed, but there’s also the nightmarish industrial excursion of “Perfect Body.” The entire second side of the tape is taken up with a twelve-and-a-half atmospheric / ambient piece, “The Psychic Hologram,” that’s pretty unnecessary. The rest is prime, ear-wrecking scorch. (cyberplasm.bandcamp.com)

In similarly nervy vein, there’s the new, self-titled four song 7” by the dynamic duo ISS, comprised of Eddie Schneider (BRAIN F≠) and Rich Ivey (WHATEVER BRAINS). Hammering mechanized punk, but it sounds human, not robotic. “I Wanna Be Dated” has some serious guitar shredding. “Armchair Aryan (Richard Spencer’s Gifts),” in addition to having one of the coolest titles of the year, is a spot-on perfect excoriation of the alt-right dickheads, calling them out for the cowards they are. “C.H.U.D.F.R.E.A.K. Swamp Meet” takes a moodier turn and the kill effect returns for “My Miata.” And, yes, once again, there’s clever sampling from old punk records such as DEAD KENNEDYS’ “Nazi Punks Fuck Off” and FLIPPER’s “Nothing.” Fucking brilliant. Eddie told me they’ve only done a couple of live shows, since he and Rich live in different cities. I hope that changes, at some point. (Sorry State, www.sorrystaterecords.com)

San Diego band THERAPY (not to be confused with the ’90s Irish rock band THERAPY?) have a six song demo that packs a wicked punch. Fast, bruising hardcore punk with a crusty undertow and hint of Swedish hardcore. Loud production, bringing the band’s meat-cleaver riffage and pulverizing rhythms into bold relief, along with Chris’s scalding, nasty vocals. A fine debut. (therapysd.bandcamp.com)

The words that Erika sings on some of the songs on FUTURA’s *Spit On The Flag* 7” could very well have been written in the 1980s—at least the title track and “Boom,” about nuclear obliteration. The other three songs deal with personal turmoil, especially “Eyes Wide Open,” about the death of a relationship. Fast and peppy hardcore punk played with skill and ragtag spirit. (En Tu Kara, entukara.bigcartel.com)

The newest TRASH KNIFE 7”, *TK*, combines four of the songs from their 2016 demo tape with a couple more recorded last year. Slam-bang punk / rock’n’roll filled with both melody and anger, along the lines the BAGS or, for a more recent reference point, NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS. Lauren’s vocals have a sarcastic, pissed off edge, whether taking aim at self-absorbed selfie takers (“Kill Your Selfie”) or abusive restaurant customers (“Tips”). Tuneful but with a razor’s edge. (trashknife.bandcamp.com)

Finally, SO BE IT is a punk / noise / sludge metal / hardcore anti-war opera (whew!) created by SIEGE drummer Robert Williams, who wrote all the music and lyrics, with a few exceptions. He enlisted the help of his SIEGE compatriots Chris Leamy and Ernie Kim, as well as a collection of vocalists from bands both local and around the world to sing the different parts. These include Ami Lawless (VOETSEK, CLITERATI), Dan Harrington (FISTULA), Jeff Heyward (GRIEF), Stoffel (YACOPSAE), Larry Lifeless (KILSLUG) and Giulio (CRIPPLE BASTARDS). The theme, as you probably already guessed, looks at the ravages of war from the perspectives of the dead and the living, all of them victims. You have grieving mothers, both American and Arabic. Ron Kovic from “Born On The Fourth Of July” (voiced by Giulio) makes an appearance, as well as the ghost of a soldier and the corpse of Uncle Sam. You also have a giddy president who can’t wait to send more young men off to war.

Inserted into the musical battleground of volume-driven fodder, there are snippets of “Taps,” “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the

World War I song "Over There" and early 60s R&B song "Soldier Boy." There's also a kick-ass cover of ALICE COOPER's "Elected," sung by Jeff Heyward. The cacophonous conclusion, "Mission Accomplished," begins with Larry Lifeless playing Uncle Sam, who has just risen from his casket, intoning those words. According to the written narration, Uncle Sam is joined by the ghost of the soldier and one of the grieving mothers for a kick line. This is done over a dirge that degenerates into a mass of free-form skronk, with Ernie Kim letting loose on his saxophone over the guitar histrionics and hammer-to-anvil-like pound. I'll resist the urge to call it "A Corpse Line" and just say mission accomplished. War sucks and SO BE IT are here to remind you of that. (deepsixrecords.com)

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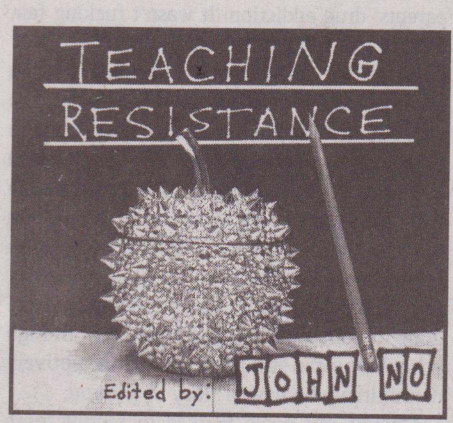

If you are a public school teacher in the United States, the likelihood is high that you will be working with at least a couple of students, and perhaps an entire classroom, who are dealing with some kind of trauma. These traumas often dovetail with and stem from poverty and other systemic oppressions (racism, misogyny, homophobia, etc.), as well as specific abuse on the individual level. The sad reality is that many (if not most) teachers are overwhelmed and freaked out by this, and unless some form of additional support is available for these students, they often run into problems and fall through the cracks in a crowded public school environment. In light of this, teachers and counselors who have personally survived trauma—including many punks—can be an invaluable resource for these students as they try to navigate an environment that is heavily weighted against them.

This month's Teaching Resistance contributor is ***Lindsay McLeary****, who is the academic coordinator for the Upward Bound program for low-income and / or first-generation-to-college students. Lindsay spent his formative years knee-deep in SoCal's survivor-heavy punk / hardcore scene, and now has the peculiar distinction of being the most heavily-tattooed person in UC Berkeley's Department of Equity and Inclusion. He has worked in education and educational outreach for well over a decade, including stints as a lecturer at USC and Stanford and a classroom teacher in Oakland and Richmond (CA) public schools. Lindsay can be contacted using the email and other info found at the end of this article.*

When I'm presenting my work to people, I start with a little disclaimer. Typically this disclaimer is geared towards educators and academics. But since this is *Maximum Rocknroll*, I'll dispense with the subtlety and formality.

I'm here to talk to you about some rough, fucked-up shit. I want you to know it's okay (and expected) for you to feel a bit of emotional and even physical discomfort—especially if you have a history of trauma. But please, if shit gets too real for you, please, please, stop reading and go take care of yourself. I'm not fucking around. I want you to be okay.

First, some background. For almost fifteen years, I have worked for a federally funded academic outreach program that works specifically with low-income high school students from "distressed" urban and rural communities throughout California, Hawaii, and Nevada. Many of the students I work with are exposed to some pretty traumatic stuff (gang shootings, drug addiction, overdoses, police violence, and domestic violence) early on in their lives. Although I started out focusing mainly on academic support, increasingly I have made it part of my job to sit with these kids and listen to their stories of trauma and chronic stress.

Listening to really fucked up stories isn't easy for anyone, but I think it is probably easier for me because I grew up in the DIY / punk community, where we (typically) don't shy away from trauma. I had two drug addicted parents, one of whom was physically and emotionally abusive, both of whom were neglectful. As a teenager, I sought refuge and escape from my family in the early '90s hardcore / anarcho-punk scene (think RKL, NAKED AGGRESSION, FINAL CONFLICT, NAUSEA, NEUROSIS) which was (ironically) rife with drug abuse, homelessness, and survivors of trauma. Still, I was attracted to this seemingly superhuman ability that my fellow punk kids had to remain open to the things that most people would turn away from. This has been invaluable to me in my work.

One day a girl in my program (let's call her "Julia") left her group of friends, sat down next to me on a bench and started talking to me. She told me about her birth family. Her biological father was African-American, and she was born to a drug-addicted Asian woman. Since her mother was unable to care for her, she gave her up to her Asian family, who hated Black people, and, by extension, her. In their care, she was neglected and mistreated.

"I think they probably were hoping that I would die, so they could be rid of me. I wasn't wanted," Julia told me, matter-of-factly. Stoically. There were no tears in her eyes. And there were no tears in mine either. This is common among people with a history of trauma. We have a kind of external numbness when discussing our own trauma, and hearing other people discuss theirs.

When Julia was still a very young child, almost an infant, she suffered burns to her body because the family tasked with protecting her tossed her in a bath of hot water without testing it first. She was taken to a hospital and child-protective services was called. She was taken away from her family and placed in foster care, at what is called a "group home."

"Things at the group home weren't much better," she commented, and smiled at me, kind of sadly.

"I bet they weren't. Those places can be pretty fucked up." I smiled back.

At the time, I had been reading John Joseph's autobiography *Evolution of a Cro-Mag*, in which he discusses what it was like growing up with a foster family. Throughout the book, John Joseph emphasizes the point that it was, in some ways, better to be homeless than to be in a group home or in an exploitative foster family. I had to stop reading it because the homophobia and misogyny were beginning to get to me. But his stories about his foster family were so fucked up that I had to agree it was better to be homeless than to live with an emotionally abusive family.

"I have to tell you Julia, I've heard a lot of stories of bad childhoods. But yours is...particularly shitty. Maybe one of the shittiest."

"I know," she said shyly, kinda laughing a bit.

"But I'm really grateful that you came to me and trusted me with your story. Thank you. Any time you want to talk, I'm here. Seriously."

She thanked me for listening and ran back to her group of friends. Pretty soon she was laughing again, and everything seemed to have gone back to normal.

Before we go any further, I want to clarify what I mean I talk about trauma, because I use this term a bit differently than how it is often typically portrayed. Our initial understanding of trauma was informed by studies done regarding the social and emotional difficulties that veterans encountered when they reintegrated back into society. Initial post-

WWI on shell-shock, for example. The way we see trauma played out in the present day, however, encompasses a lot more than this specific kind of trauma.

My understanding of this issue is more informed by the problems experienced by the population I work with: low-income children and families living in distressed urban areas. The trauma experienced by the community I work with typically involves either (1) a perception that one is in a dangerous situation or otherwise lacks safety or (2) the expectation that one's basic needs—housing, emotional support, food, sanitation—will not be met. So, for example, many of the kids I work with live with housing insecurity—their caregivers can't provide stable housing. Even those who have apartments or other housing may get evicted and end up living in hotels, with friends or extended family, or in cars.

The way the media focus typically makes it seem, a 25-year-old soldier who watches his friend get blown up by an improvised explosive device probably fares worse on the scale of trauma than a 12-year-old kid with an alcoholic father, who has also been housing insecure for six months.

But in my experience, that's often not the case.

Adults who have grown up in supportive, loving families have brains that are well adapted to cope with the intense stress reaction that accompanies a traumatic experience. Children don't. Especially if, since infancy, they have grown up in a family that is coping with constant distress. Also, it has to be mentioned that veterans have generally have access to some form of psychiatric and therapeutic treatment, while low-income kids often lack access to these resources.

There's a kind of equation that I employ to think about who is most likely to experience trauma. The more vulnerable a population is, the more likely they are to have been exposed to really shitty situations that can leave semi-permanent psychological scars. People of color are more vulnerable than white folks; low-income folks are more vulnerable than affluent people. Young people (especially women) are—quite obviously—more vulnerable than male adults, and so the majority of reported rapes involve girls under fifteen years old.

Low-income kids are in a really fucked situation.

They are the demographic most likely to be exposed to unrelenting stress, lack of physical and emotional safety, food and housing insecurity, and they are the most likely to be exposed to traumatic experiences that change the way their brains work. Permanently.

Some statistics:

Trauma affects kids' ability to regulate their emotional reactions. Low-income kids who are exposed to traumatic situations often act impulsively and destructively, especially children under the age of ten. Far too often, psychiatrists respond to this by prescribing really heavy medications. Children in low-income families are four times more likely to receive antipsychotic medication. In 2008, 20,000 low-income kids under the age of five were prescribed antipsychotics! These drugs (including Seroquel, Risperdal, and Abilify) carry warnings that recommend against their use by children because they can inhibit learning and development of important cognitive functioning.

With the exception of psychiatric interventions meant to calm the most out-of-control kids, low-income children who experience trauma generally don't have access to mental health professionals.

For the last two years, I have been getting up in front of audiences full of people who work in education and trying to convince them of one thing: we need more mental health professionals working in low-income neighborhoods and our underfunded, under-resourced public schools. The sad irony is that my students come from the population most in need of mental health care, but because they're low-income, they are least likely to get it.

All too often when I approach educators with "this kid has had really stressful traumatic shit going on his life. He's experienced some really heavy stuff," their response is, "That's terrible. But what can I do? I'm not a psychologist or a therapist. This isn't in my wheelhouse."

So I have something to say to these educators:

The reality of the situation is, most of these kids aren't gonna get professional help. They don't have their own psychiatrist or therapist. They have you. So you're going to have to learn how to help them as best you can.

It's not easy for anyone. Especially if you have a history of trauma yourself.

One evening about six years ago, I sat with a girl (we'll call her "Anna"), a high school senior who was spending the summer away from home at a residential academic program at UC Berkeley. She had just received a phone call from her family informing her that her aunt, who was struggling with drug addiction, had died from an overdose. Her family did not have any money to fly her home or the time off work to drive down and get her, so she had to remain in the program. She ended up missing her aunt's funeral.

There was no sobbing. Anna just stared into space while tears streamed slowly down her otherwise impassive face. This is something I've noticed about kids who have grown up in toxic, traumatic environments. They learn to cry in total silence.

"I'm so sorry," I said. "You're too young to have to deal with shit like this."

Anna looked up at me and smiled, but with pain in her eyes. "Do I really have a choice? I've been dealing with this shit my entire life." I could sense her frustration.

"I know. And it's just not fair."

I asked if it was okay to give her a hug. She said yes, and reached out to hug me. And when I hugged her the silent tears transformed into vocalized grief, as she finally allowed herself to really cry.

Later that night, I sat and reflected on my own trauma. How my mother overdosed when I was eleven. How the paramedics came to the house. How the doctor came out into the waiting room and told me and my father that he was doing the best he could, but she might not make it through the night.

I realized that, when I had expressed to Anna that she shouldn't have to deal with shit like overdoses, I was (to some extent) also talking to my younger self. I was too young. I shouldn't have had to deal with the consequences of my parents' drug addiction. It wasn't fucking fair. Not for me, and not for Anna.

If you're an educator working with a traumatized population, you do have the capacity to help children and adolescents who have experienced trauma. You don't need a degree in psychology to sit with someone who is experiencing grief, or to help them process their emotions. You don't need to be a licensed therapist to be able to deliver psychological first aid. You don't need to have gone to college, or even graduated from high school. You can still learn to listen receptively to children who have a story to tell you.

One of my goals here is to recruit more trauma-informed non-clinical practitioners (I'm gonna abbreviate this as "NCP" from this point on) into the field of education, and to convince more educators to become trauma-informed NCPs. I feel like all individuals working in education and community services need to embrace and learn trauma-informed care.

Let me briefly lay down the difference between a clinical practitioner and a non-clinical practitioner. A clinical practitioner is a psychiatrist, licensed therapist, or licensed social worker. They're people with degrees and expertise. A non-clinical practitioner can be anyone who is knowledgeable in practicing trauma-informed care. I work in education, not mental health, but I am also trained in providing trauma-informed care, so I'm a non-clinical practitioner.

I've got to emphasize this: NCPs are really fucking important, and they are needed—especially for children in low-income communities. We need to spread this message: clinicians are *not* the only ones who can practice trauma-informed care. For low-income students, it helps that NCPs can be a person from their community, a person who has experienced (and survived) the same trauma as them. An NCP is a person who the student trusts. The NCP is often the bridge between low-income students and actual clinical care. To this extent, the NCP can be much more important than the clinician.

Here's an analogy I've been using that I shamelessly stole from *The Punisher* miniseries on Netflix.

Imagine that a child is stuck a deep hole in the ground, and they're injured. Some people are going to walk by that hole, look in and see someone stuck, and quickly look away. It hurts them too much to see someone in that condition. Some people are going to go to the edge of the hole and shout words of sympathy or encouragement. "You'll get out of the hole someday! I believe in you!" This does no good at all. Some people are going to try and give the person tools to get out of the hole, but not show the person who is stuck how to use them. Some people are going to throw down medical supplies, but the person's injuries need to be treated by a doctor.

Then one day a person jumps into the hole with the child. The child freaks out and says, "What are you doing?! I'm stuck in this hole. I have been for days. Now we're both stuck! Can you even help me? Can you treat my injuries? Are you a doctor?"

The person who jumped into the hole says, "No, I'm not a doctor. But I can help you. You see, I've been in this hole before, and I know the way out. So we're going to climb out of this hole together."

I think this is the most powerful thing that we educators who come from the punk community have to offer: we come from a community where many of us have experienced and survived trauma, and come out the other side as (relatively) healthy and functioning human beings. We have been to some scary places in our lives. These are the some of the same places that low-income students now find themselves. All we need to help them heal is the courage to go back to those scary places with these kids and help them find their way out.

"Confess the faults you hide
Approach what seems repulsive
Teach those who seem unteachable
Give away what you are attached to
Go to the places that scare you."
—The Five Slogans of Machig Labdrön

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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For more information, please visit the website for The National Child Traumatic Stress Network at https://www.nctsn.org/
Educators can download The Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators at https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers / educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world), counselor, or advocate for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com ***–John No, Teaching Resistance editor***

MOM, LOOK, I'M IN A MAGAZINE!!
GUEST COLUMN
SEX PISTOL
A
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Band Drama

The freshest band wound that I have was a little over a year ago now. I really saw a lot of potential in this one, and I was confident that our differences in personalities would work themselves out once we got the momentum going and it took off on its own. I now see why it's never healthy to go into a relationship with that mentality. Waiting for someone to change and encouraging them to play against their personality isn't fair to either of us, and I should have taken that into account from the first day.

This band started as a side project of the drummer from my current long running band, "Alex." He was actually very vocally frustrated with the band and in a few ways started seeking a new project as a way to express to the rest of us that he could leave if he wanted to. He had met a new transplant to the city, "Lance," who played guitar and sang, and had been writing bedroom songs for years. He moved into our band's studio, and I was brought in because Alex and I knew each other well enough that creatively we were ready to explore a new sound.

I had my own frustrations with our current band because I felt like "just the bass player" and really didn't get to have a voice and make decisions. With this new band, I saw my opportunity to get in on something from the inception and establish myself as a key player. We learned his songs quickly and I recorded us for our home studio demo, I made our social media accounts and booking email address, and within less then a month we already had momentum.

The trouble started when Lance wanted to find a second guitarist. Lance and I were setting up for rehearsal one evening when Alex came in, clearly surprised and awkward. He was with a friend and scene vet, "Michael," and it was weird. But Michael had his guitar and huge pedalboard with him, so we figured he was here to audition. We tried showing him some songs and he clearly wasn't listening or caring. Instead, he kept showing Alex his own riffs and talking over us, almost annoyed that we were even in the room.

(I later figured out that Alex was trying to put together multiple projects, and just completely forgot that we had practice that night. Michael was under the impression that he and Alex were going to jam his songs and get a band started, so yeah, when they came in he really had no intention of auditioning and was kind of annoyed that we were trespassing on his and Alex's rehearsal.)

So Michael made a horrible first impression, but he later figured out that Alex was committing to our band and wasn't really going to be available for a third project, so Michael started following up with us about joining. I was very much against it because I felt that we needed someone subtle that could fill in blanks, and Michael was loud and imposing. He only wanted to join our band so that down the line he could contribute as a songwriter. Once he did join and start pushing his own songs, that's when we really got to see Lance's true form, and it turned out that Lance was actually extremely controlling. Now that Lance had all of his players, he started making sure that we knew that we were *his* players, and Alex and I started to wonder if the horseshit from this new project was much different from our main band's horseshit.

It was around this time our main band started getting really aggressive and shitty towards us. They weren't supportive of us starting this project from the beginning, and they really started lashing out and constantly taking shots at us. They were so offended that we were getting that much accomplished so quickly, and they felt like we weren't "sharing the wealth" and getting them the same affluence. It really affected Alex. When this new band was ready to record our first real EP at a good studio, he was noticeably uncomfortable because of what that meant for our other band. The two days that we recorded, he showed up really late and really wasted. The whole process was kind of a shit show, and Lance's demeanor indicated he was frustrated with and disappointed in us. When we got to mixing, Lance's stranglehold tightened and I started to feel like his employee again, instead of a creative member. We put the tape out ourselves and it was actually really well received, which of course meant getting a ton of shit from our other band. The shows started getting even bigger and we were making a big impression on the new crop of bands that were blowing up in the scene. We went on a mini tour and the time that we spent living on top of each other was the thing that killed us. It was all too much too fast, and it imploded.

The night that it ended, Lance texted the band group chat that he wanted to meet up for the first time since tour. The writing on the wall was obvious, and even though we'd been so rocky it was still surreal. This was the same week as the Ghost Ship fire in Oakland, so I was numb and still working through that fresh loss as well. That night was the candlelight vigil, so we met up early and were going to drive there right after. I had a weird sense of tranquility about me, and I was surprised when the other three did too. For months, Lance had been tense and mean, so when he walked in calm and open it was amazing. I felt like I hadn't seen my friend all year and he was back, like he was when we first started. He then said what we all knew, which was that things had gotten so bad that he felt that it was time to break us up. I was upset that again, he did it on his own terms without consulting us, but with everything else that had happened I understood. We all shared that moment and it meant the world.

Our other band was picking up Alex and me to head to Oakland for the vigil, and they could see on our faces right away what had just happened. I'm not making this next part up, and I almost hate how poetic it was. My first conversation with Lance was about how much we both love JETS TO BRAZIL, especially the song "Sea Anemone," which we both agreed is one of the greatest breakup songs that we'd ever heard. I got in the truck and that song was actually fucking playing. Lance walked up to the window and said "hey, this is going to be my last month in the studio, OK?" literally right as the lyric "take my name off of the lease" played. It was so fucking perfect I could have puked. We drove to Oakland where all of our friends were crying, grieving, and holding each other. It was exactly what I needed and totally put everything in perspective.

I had said earlier that we were destined to fail from the beginning, and honestly we chose to be because we didn't communicate. I strongly believe that if Lance had just called it his *solo project* on the first day that the band would have had no problems. I read something recently about band relationships that said "don't trick yourself into believing that you're a democracy." Meaning that you will always need to have one person at the helm that does all the shit work and networking. I had always pushed myself into the equation, and Lance struggled with that relationship. Alex had one foot out the door from the beginning because without the blessing from our other band he wasn't in a place to really dive into this project. I also don't think any of us every really accepted Michael into the band and there was tension there throughout. So, ultimately, none of us were on the same page, and none of us were willing to budge. We stuck with it only because we all honestly really loved the music that we were making, and we enjoyed the immediate attention and response. We ended on a high note, and in hindsight I'm glad that we did. We flamed out and sailed all the way to the scene of the crash, which was further than it ever should have been. I still miss it all the time, but I think that's my own ego struggling with the feeling of failure, and as I write this I feel a bit of closure. It feels good to admit that because I wasn't willing to compromise that led to a factor in our downfall, but that's the way it had to be. Since the breakup, my relationship with the three of them has never been better. I genuinely wish them the best, and I hope that they can find bandmates that compliment their personalities. Fuck trying to change someone. Let them find people that will be a perfect fit, and I'll forever support what they make with them.

—Michael De Toffoli

women and butches

It's time for another *goddamn* positive punk column! So let me be positive here: I feel like *shit*. I haven't had a drink or smoked in nearly five years, but my head feels trapped in tar. How the hell am I gonna do anything like this? How am I gonna listen to any hardcore today??? *How???* I didn't do anything to deserve this. No matter... I'm going to do my best to give you a little look into my life before the headache caused my whole *life* to crumble.

Recently the band PHYSIQUE from Olympia, Washington came by the *MRR* compound to listen to records and shoot the shit before their gig at 1-2-3-4 Go! Records that night. It was the first time I had met the majority of the band, although I had been acquainted with Jake for a year or two beforehand due to their work in other popular Oly bands. They are picturesque punks: studded, fully decked out, each impeccably dressed as though they were conceived while their parents were listening to DISCHARGE. We fawned over releases by crasher favorites such as GLOOM and D-beat heroes ANTI-CIMEX, each of us thrashing about to the cacophony blasting out of the speakers. We quickly bonded over the affirmation we feel while listening to noisy and harsh punk, and spent most of the day going back and forth about our favorite punk jams.

The only difference between them and other modern D-beat / crasher fiends is that the band consists of all transgender individuals. PHYSIQUE actively focus on trans issues in their lyrics, albeit in a mostly negative way. They've focused on the negative relation between their bodies and their identities: "*Caught in their war / My own mind and body / Aren't even at peace / Hate my physique / I hate it*" and "*See the way they look at me / Piercing eyes question my identity / Biological nothing / Internalized hatred of self / Why should I be anything? / Biological nothing.*" Crasher crust was made for disgust! The shift here from a hatred of war / capitalism / other D-beat approved(™) topics to dysphoria is a refreshingly personal and unique change. Maybe it isn't that much of a shift after all—trans people often are in combat, either with society (to change their opinions on what "gender" is) or with themselves.

But perhaps it is too controversial of a shift for some punks. At their show in Oakland that night, the singer Fucker paused in between songs to deliver a speech about Transgender Day of Visibility, and about her experiences... Well, I'm assuming that her speech *would* have covered that, but she was promptly heckled by two young punks, causing Fucker to step back and for the rest of the band to roar into another number, more furious than before. The heckling was the least physical aspect of their intrusion in the shows space, as these two boys had been violently throwing their bodies into the mostly still audience for the majority of the show. When the punks were asked to leave, they protested by saying they had grown up in the *real* punk scene, "and not that quasi-faggot punk scene that's inside."

Here's the thing, *fucker*: trans and queer punks have been present since the *beginning* of the "real" punk scene. All of your favorite punk shit is probably influenced by the "quasi-faggot" punk scene (literally—thanks to NEW YORK DOLLS and other glam-rock shitheads for your quasi-faggotry). And trans punks have just as much of a claim to D-beat, raw punk, crasher crust, and whatever other "extreme" genres of music you can think of. The presence of queers in other harsh music forms, such as industrial, metal or noise, is already well documented in other places. Now is the time for queer D-beat.

Prior to the show, Bee from PHYSIQUE and I discussed the increased presence of transgender people in harsher punk bands and shows. While neither of us want to potentially out anyone, both of us feel as though we have been encountering more and more trans people (most of whom are non-binary or women) interested in D-beat and crasher shit. Perhaps this came from the proliferation of easily accessible info about little-known genre greats on Tumblr (a site once referred to, quite accurately, as a "trans pain cave" full of dysphoric younger queers). Or perhaps the internet as a whole should be blamed—the amount of music you *can't* listen to for free is now much smaller than the amount you *can*. But one thing's for sure: our numbers are growing. But will we move from a quasi-faggot scene to a full-blown queer scene? *Yes we will!* The void is *ours*, fucker!

***

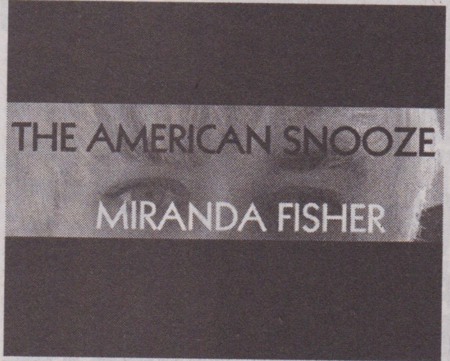
Unrelated thoughts:

Someone pitched an Israeli scene report to us and they are working on it right now! We are interested in running it, but we would also love to run a Palestinian scene report (if possible). Similarly, someone is working on an Indonesian scene report right now, and we would love to get in touch with DIY Indonesian bands to be interviewed. Shoot us an email and we will give you all the details on what we're looking for in interviews and scene reports: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

The interview with Liz Pelly wasn't done in time for this issue. My apologies...Hopefully it will be done in time for issue #422

My old metalpunk / D-beat / whatever band MYAKKA was interviewed in issue #2 of the *Break The Chain* zine, alongside black metal group DAWN RAY'D, the punk bands DRUGCHARGE and NIGHT LONER, and the artists Matt Jaffe and Stacey Matchett. It was an honor to be the interviewee instead of the interviewer! Write to Matt if you're interested in learning what the hell a "myakka" is duvaldiykid@gmail.com.

I feel like shit more often that I want to admit, and I'm not exactly thrilled at the prospect of only complaining about transgender issues in this column. After all, I listen to punk as well! I'm considering making my own perzine to whine and moan. Interested in some way? Write me! Joan@maximumrocknroll.com.



THE AMERICAN SNOOZE

MIRANDA FISHER

I kind of feel like I tricked *MRR* into letting me have a column by becoming a coordinator. If I'd had to submit three proposed topics for a column, the way most people do, I don't know if I could have done it. There's an impulse here to style the column as either a dry diatribe ("dictionary.com defines 'punk' as *any prepared substance, usually in stick form, that will smolder...*") or a fuckin' LiveJournal entry or something ("Dear Diary: today I woke up, worked on the magazine, obsessively googled how many eggs I'm allowed to eat each day, fantasized about being slowly crushed to death, slept"), and while some people can pull off that kinda thing, I sure can't.

I mean, the idea of writing about myself is fucking embarrassing, right? I understand that for some people it's not, in the same sense that I have a vague, theoretical understanding that some people enjoy having pictures taken of themselves and it's not *necessarily* indicative of a personality disorder. There's nothing appealing to me about putting my life on display; it's private, but more importantly, it's *boring*. (White, straight, cisgender, went to a "good" college, close relationship with my family—I mean, come on.) No, I have no interest in detailing my life here. What I do have is a lot of opinions! Correct opinions that are very important and that everyone should be forced to read!

The problem is that *of course* my opinions are going to reflect my background, my life. If anyone were to comb through all the reviews I've written and compile every instance of the word "sexy," well, they would probably learn a lot more about me than I'd ever feel comfortable spelling out explicitly on the page. And of course the more excited one is about something, the more one wants to express an opinion, the more that opinion reveals about the writer. I feel far more vulnerable when expressing a positive opinion about something—some piece of art, generally a record or a song, I guess—than I do in almost any other situation. When I'm writing about something I love, I feel like the stakes are so high to get it *exactly right*, to perfectly express just what it makes me feel and how.

Have you ever tried to share something you love with someone else, but they just don't get it, or—maybe even worse—they like it *wrong?* They like your favorite album because it's "fun" instead of recognizing the intense emotions it provokes in you? Then you'll understand what I'm talking about here. Trying to share something you care about with another person is an immensely vulnerable act. It's not that I cut off a friendship after the person in question failed to appreciate the wit, formal experimentation, and uniquely American cynicism of William Gaddis's *JR*. But a small hope of mine was crushed. I wanted her to see *me* through the book. I loved (still love!) that novel so much that it feels like a part of me.

That's a moronic attitude to have, frankly. I didn't write the book; my interpretation of it was no more correct than anyone else's. (Okay, maybe I believe that it was. Can't help it.) But criticism offers a chance to bridge that gap: rather than holding my breath in the hopes that someone else will recognize me in the art that I love, I can put forth exactly what I see in it. The pressure is on, then, to get the words exactly right. It can feel, somehow, like a unique opportunity to form a real connection with another human. For those of us who spend so much of our lives listening, reading, or observing, it's crucial that others understand these are not passive activities. They're transformative, and they have so much potential within them that to try to explain them to someone else feels like an opporunity to be approached with utmost care.

That's why it's so much easier to trash things, to explain what we hate: there are no stakes if we don't care about the topics of our analysis. So without further ado, let me announce here that I think the CLASH are extremely fucking overrated and that the song "Lost in the Supermarket" in particular makes me want to puke. See you next time!

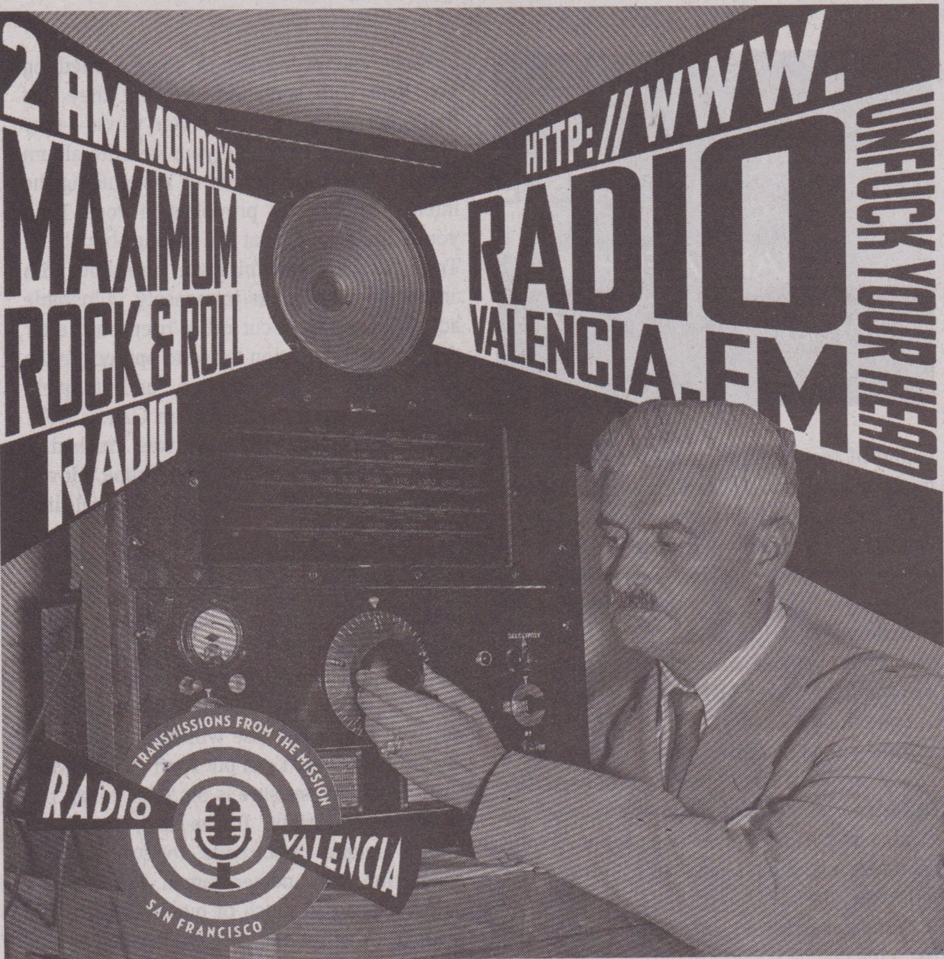
***

Rejected column topics:

- Top Ten Eggs I Ate This Month
- Why You Should All Buy Back Issues Of My Old Zine *Casting Couch* And Get Them Out Of My Bedroom
- Regardless Of What I May Joke About, I Promise That I Do Not Actually Want To Fuck Muppets, But If I Did Here's Which Ones

***

miranda@maximumrocknroll.com but don't try to fucking sell me on the CLASH because guess what I'm 31 years old and I've had time to form a considered opinion. I made a fanzine about the TEMPTATIONS, so you can email me if you wanna buy that; it's two bucks shipped, which sounds like a steal until you realize you just bought a zine about the TEMPTATIONS.



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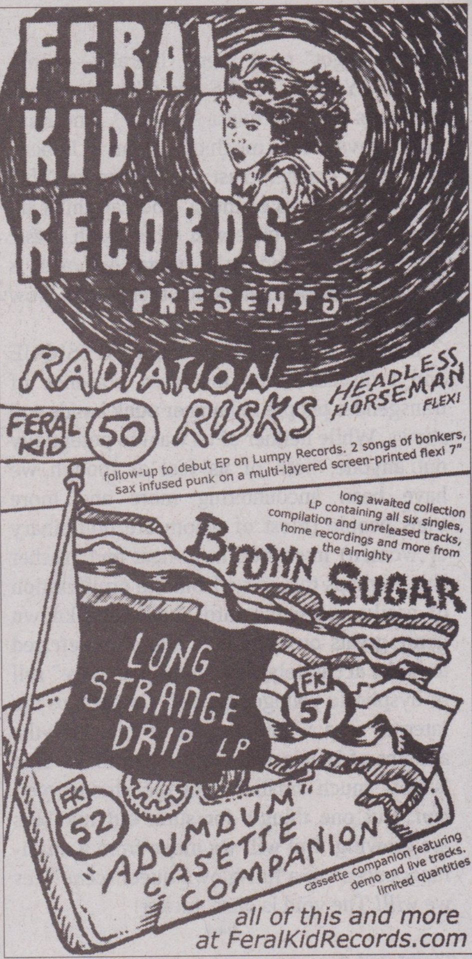

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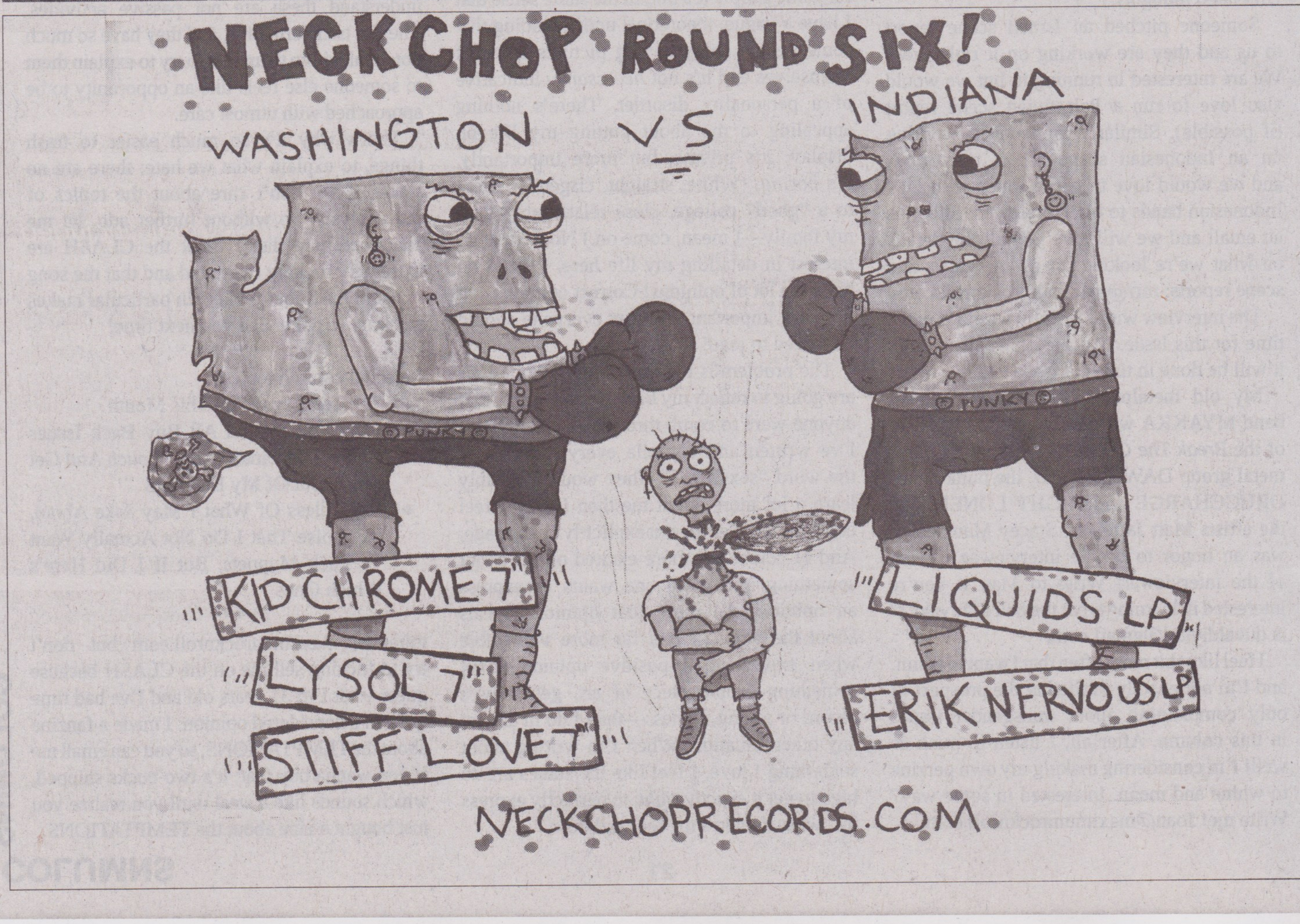

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CRUZ DE NAVAJAS

In December 2016 while on tour with my band Ötzi, I shared the stage with brand new dark wave band Cruz De Navajas at the Post Punk Not Dead fest in Mexico City. My first impression was the energy they immediately had, knowing it was their first show. Dancey and dark! It was a packed night and Sharon released her badass front person energy with no fear. Sharon sings and performs with a powerful message, which can be rare in post-punk music. I've been a big fan of Alex's past projects (Zotz), so it was safe to assume I would be into his new band. And I was! Less than a year later, Cruz De Navajas toured the West Coast and played Oakland at Near Dark Fest, a dark punk fest that I co-organize.

On a recent afternoon in Oakland, a video chat occurred that included Sharon (singer / synth writer), Daniel (guitar), and Alex (bass guitar / drum programmer). Alex now lives in Oakland so we hung out at his place and this is the conversation we all shared. Enjoy!

Introduction and interview by Gina Marie. Photos by Mr. Moseley and Carlos "Zangrees" García

MRR: I was able to be at your first show in Mexico. What has changed for the band since November 2016?

Alex: The main change that has happened is that I moved to the US a year ago. I think that's the main big change. What else has changed, guys?

Daniel: Yeah, that has to be the main one, Alex moving to Oakland because that has changed the creative process.

Sharon: Yeah, we're not able to write new songs so quickly.

Daniel: 'Cause on the first batch of songs, they were practically finished when Sharon and Alex showed them to me. The structure with the bass and synths where almost ready, then I only had to do the guitars and the process was very fast from there.

Sharon: Yeah, and now Alex has to send us his parts and Daniel and I have to see each other and do the rest...

MRR: I guess I should ask how the band started. So the band was already happening before Daniel got involved?
Sharon: Yeah, Alex and I started the band, we got together and... Alex already had the drums and the bass to some of the songs, so I added the synths. At first we had another guitar player, but she didn't really want to be in the band.
Alex: Yeah, then I asked Yair and Branny, who I played with in a band called Zotz, if they wanted to play guitar and synth. Yair had started to mess around with synths by himself, but that didn't really go anywhere, we tried a couple of times...

Like Sharon was saying, I had a couple of songs that I intended for a solo project, but I never did it by myself, so I asked Sharon if she wanted to do something with those songs with me. That's how it started. She and I played in a band together before where she played bass and I played drums, that's how we met, and I asked her if she wanted to do this with me because I was never going to do it by myself, so we started and asked all these different people to play guitar, and none of them clicked until Daniel came along.

MRR: So obviously the band has gone through a big change, are there any pros to Alex moving to Oakland? Or has it just been harder?
Daniel: I think to some degree it helps him being involved in the scene in the US to bring Cruz de Navajas to that country. That is a "pro." The only thing that is more difficult is the songwriting, and that can be solved, you know?
Sharon: It just takes longer, that's it.
Daniel: Yeah but we can work it out, we just started this process of songwriting at a distance...

MRR: Have you wrote many songs in the new, long distance way? Are you working on the next record?
Daniel Yeah, we had only one session, but it was very productive. We had the bass and drum tracks that Alex sent. We picked one, and a couple of hours later we had the main theme of the song.

MRR: How did you play them together, then?
Alex: I did a shitty recording with my phone of me playing bass with the drum machine, and I sent it to them. Daniel has some recording equipment and software, so they put the track that I sent and recorded guitar and synth. They actually got together and recorded over it and it's as if we recorded together. It's pretty cool.

MRR: Are any of you working on other music projects while you are separated?
Sharon: I'm currently not in any other music projects.
Daniel: I am, I make some kind of experimental electronic music and production, that's the only thing.

MRR: What's the project called?
Daniel: It's called Daniel A-rp, but now I think I'm more focused on Cruz de Navajas and to make things work out here at home with money and my job and so on, to be able to go on tour. But yeah, I make music when I can.
Alex: I have a band with you, Gina, called Adrenochrome, and I play in False Figure, both from Oakland.

MRR: He's just this Oakland guy now, what do you think about that? *[laughter]* OK,that's not a real question...

Daniel: Yeah, last summer when we were there, I had never been to Oakland before, and I realized it was an Alex kinda town. *[laughter]*

MRR: Are there any other things or projects that you do other than playing music? I know you, Sharon, make some vegan chokers and stuff.
Sharon: Well, as a hobby I make chokers, but I don't do that so much anymore. I kinda got tired of it. I've been making guitar pedals for a while now, and I'm doing that again...

MRR: Oh, cool! What do you mean?
Sharon: Actually building guitar pedals from scratch. It's basically what I went to school for, but I stopped for a while.
Alex: Yeah, she tried to do an effects pedal company ,but got together with flakey people so...
Sharon: And they fucked me over, so I'm trying to redo everything but by myself, so it's taking ages, but...I don't know, maybe this year they will come out.
Alex: I don't do much besides playing in bands and working.

MRR: Yeah, well let's talk about Sharon, she seems more interesting. *[laughter]* Or what about you Daniel?
Daniel: Yeah, I have my electronic music project, and I work as a graphic designer in a school for kids who want to be DJs or music producers. I do graphic design and some video editing and stuff.

MRR: So tell me, what's coming up for Cruz de Navajas?
Alex: We are touring the United States!
Sharon: We have a tour coming up, and we plan to use that time to finish all the new songs and record the new album.
Alex: Yeah, we're gonna try and record the new songs here in Oakland after the tour is over, . Hopefully we can sort out details and finish writing while on tour and then record in a couple of days here in Oakland with Skott Brown (of Altar de Fey).

The tour is going to start on May 24th in Seattle and finish on June 24th here in the Bay, so it's a whole month. We will be doing the tour together with False Figure. Both bands wanted to do a long full US tour, and the only way for me to work that out with taking time off was to do the tour together, so I'll be doing double duty every night. We'll see how I manage to do that. *[laughter]* Daniel did that on the last tour with Espejo Convexo (RIP).

MRR: Unfortunately, I don't speak much Spanish, so I don't fully know what the lyrics are about. Sharon, are you the one mainly choosing the topics?
Sharon: Yeah, I'm the one who writes the lyrics. I usually pick topics that are political, and it's mostly about feminicides and disappearances in Mexico...For the next album I was thinking of writing the stories of the girls that have been killed just for being women, that's like the main topic I want to talk about on the next album.

MRR: Which women are you talking about?
Sharon: Women in general in Mexico, there's a lot of gender violence towards women. Approximately four women get killed in Mexico every hour, just for being women, just because "they" can.

MRR: Because they can how? Because the government doesn't give a shit?
Sharon: Yeah, most men don't get convicted for these crimes. It's a really big thing and it's growing really fast. It's a huge topic because it goes from their own husbands killing them because of jealousy or because they don't act "like women should," to men throwing acid on them because they blame women for their virginity. It's terrible to read the news and these stories everyday because it happens in colleges and on the street, but it mainly happens at home, when we should be able to feel safe. You can tell how big the social issue is when you read people commenting in support of the murderers and saying things like "she deserves it for being a whore" and stuff like that.

MRR: How does it affect you, being a woman in Mexico?
Sharon: Well, it's fucking scary to be outside as a girl, especially alone. Most of my friends and I carry either tasers, boxers, or knives. It's crazy because it's all over; it's not like the city is an oasis where it's excluded from everything that's going on because it's not and nobody really does anything. So what I'm trying to do is make these issues visible and inform people of what's going on here.

MRR: I respect that you are a voice for that especially with this style of music. I don't see a lot of political darkwave and goth, at least not as much as hardcore, for example. It's really powerful. Is that something you think about? Have you noticed or felt it was lacking in this genre?

Here are the lyrics to Esclavas (Slaves) translated in English which are directly inspired by the feminicides topic we discussed:

Slaves

You peel off the mask with the identity that you were given at birth
Priests that boil
Priests that boil your skin
Priests that boil skin masks

Nobody recognizes you
Nobody will recognize you
Nobody gives you identity
You're a slave to society

Slaves

Forced to go back
Priests who boil your skin

They boil to own you

Slave
Before their eyes, you are a slave

People are beasts

Blood spills to the higher self
Beasts at birth hide in the womb
Act without will, we can not value ourselves
We are sadists of the attachment, we can't stop it

You are water, I am fire
And in your hand I can read the uncertain

Sharon: I have noticed, and I feel if you have the power to get to a crowd, you should give them some information, or a message. For the new album, I want to talk more about these stories because it's something really big going on.

MRR: And for shits and giggles I wanted to ask a couple of random questions. What was everyone's first show / concert? *[Sharon shouts "oh nooooo"]* **Ha! I knew you were gonna be embarrassed!**
Sharon You guys go first!
Alex: My first concert was Metallica, the Wherever We May Roam roam tour in '92? I think? I went with my older cousin, she took me and it was the best shit ever.
Daniel: My first concert was Pantera, like in '98 or '97 maybe.
Sharon: Mine was super shitty compared to you guys! My first show was Blink-182. *[everyone cheers]* I was like eleven and super happy and excited.

MRR: I'm glad I asked that question. Metallica, Pantera and Blink-182, huh? That's what inspires all your music, right? *[laughter]*
Alex: That's like the three generations in our band right there.
Sharon: Right, you can tell our ages with that question. *[laughter]*

MRR: If you could choose a lineup for a show with any band that has existed, what would be your dream show to play?
Sharon: How many bands?

MRR: Let's say a normal show, not a fest. *[laughter]*
Sharon: OK, I would say the Smiths of course, the Cure...which would be weird...
Alex: Yeah, that would be really weird!

MRR: It's a dream show! Anything can happen! *[laughter]*
Sharon: Cocteau Twins and Christian Death with Rozz.

MRR: That would be a good show.
Alex: Yeah, I don't know about the Smiths though...I would like to play a show with Amebix, Killing Joke, The Sisters of Mercy and...Eskorbuto ,I guess? I don't know.
Sharon: I would add Parálisis Permanente too!
Alex: There you go! That's a good one!
Daniel: Yeah I would have Parálisis, the Adverts, PiL in the *Metal Box*-era and the Cure.

MRR: Cool! I know it's a dorky question, but I feel instead of asking what your influences are, answering that question kinda showed what you all are into or what music is inspiring you.

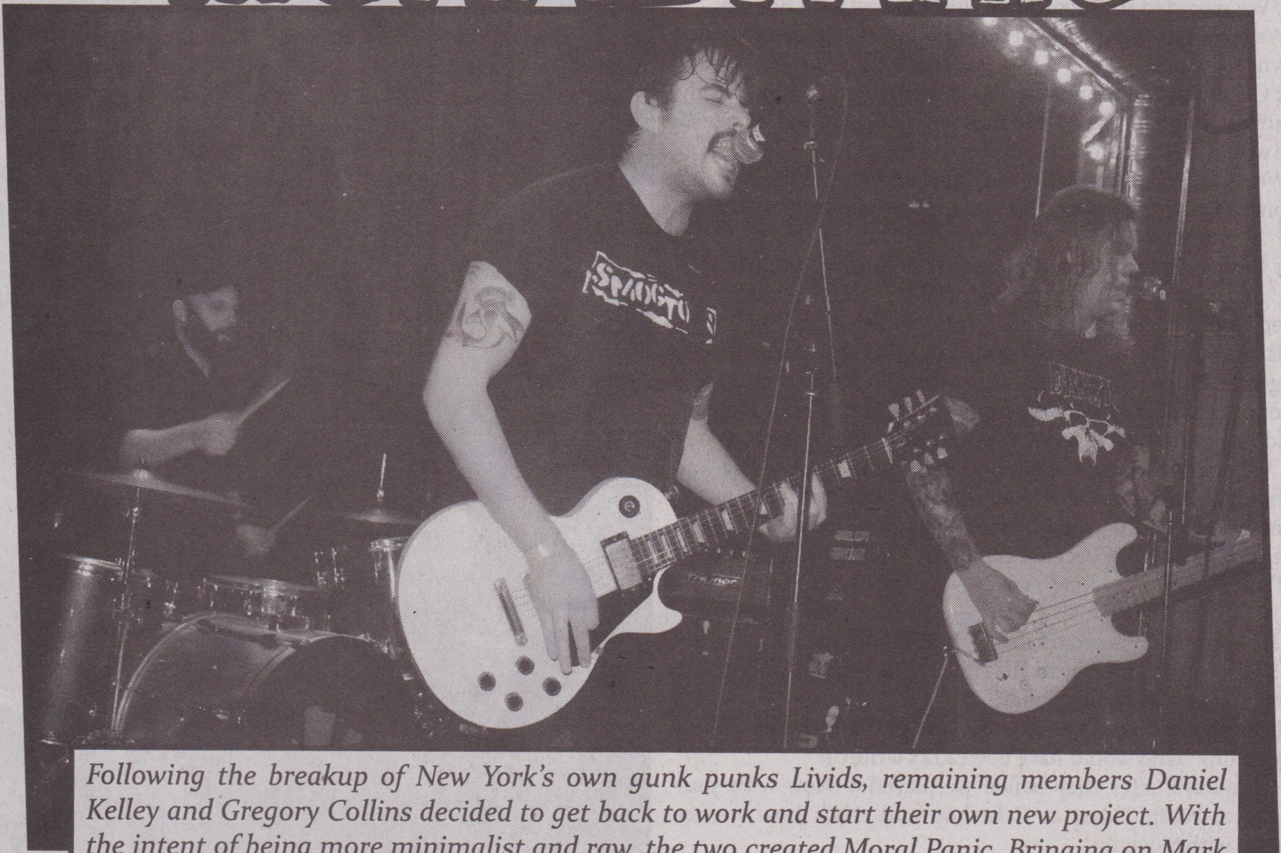
OK, I need to know, are you gonna be wearing that wedding dress on the next tour?
Sharon: If it's not too hot! I don't know, I'm gonna take it with me, but I will only use it if it's not too hot. Last time I couldn't use it in Texas! *[laughter]* I wish I could use it at every show, but it's also hard to dance in that, I felt like I was gonna fucking fall on the floor!

MRR: Any other information you want to add?
Alex: We have a bandcamp page where you can listen to our songs, it's cruzdenavajas.bandcamp.com. Our record *Dominación* is out on Going Underground records in the US and Symphony of Destruction in Europe. We will be touring the US with False Figure from Oakland from May 24th till June 24th, see you all on the dancefloor! Thanks a lot Gina!

CRUZ DE NAVAJAS // FALSE FIGURE SPRING TOUR 2018

5/24 Seattle WA
5/25 Olympia WA
5/26 Portland OR
5/27 Boise ID
5/28 Salt Lake City UT
5/29 Denver CO
5/30 Kansas City MO
5/31 St. Louis MO
6/1 Milwaukee WI
6/2 Chicago IL
6/3 Detroit MI
6/4 Pittsburgh PA
6/5 Baltimore MD
6/6 Philadelphia PA
6/8 Providence RI
6/9 Brooklyn NY
6/12 Washington DC
6/13 Richmond VA
6/14 Atlanta GA
6/15 New Orleans LA
6/16 Houston TX
6/17 Austin TX
6/18 San Antonio TX
6/19 El Paso TX
6/20 Phoenix AZ
6/21 Riverside CA
6/22 Los Angeles CA
6/23 Bakersfield CA
6/7 Boston MA
6/24 San Francisco CA
6/27 Oakland CA

MORAL PANIC



Following the breakup of New York's own gunk punks Livids, remaining members Daniel Kelley and Gregory Collins decided to get back to work and start their own new project. With the intent of being more minimalist and raw, the two created Moral Panic. Bringing on Mark Brei on bass to round out the trio, the three have been out on a mission to melt as many faces as possible.

Interview by Steven Fisher of the Wilful Boys.
Photos by Jeremy Harris.

MRR: So how long have you guys been a band?

Greg: Daniel and I started almost immediately after our old band Livids broke up. Which was like...

Daniel: Almost three years ago. Yeah, we fucked around for awhile. We tried out some different people to sing, and that didn't work out. I guess if there is any good in that, it is that I was able to write a lot of songs and get material sorted.

Greg: We tried bass players and singers and took like a solid year before we actually solidified a lineup.

Daniel: Finally we just decided that I should sing and we got our friend Bradley Dean of Mighty Fine to come play bass, and we started playing shows.

Greg: Wait, wait, this is not detailed enough. After we got a lineup together, Daniel and I went out for beers one snowy winter evening and I slipped on a icy grate and broke my ankle. It took me like six months to recover and play drums again. Once I was back on my feet, Bradley decided to quit the band.

Daniel: Yeah, we recorded our record with Bradley, and almost immediately after he quit. I guess playing once every three months was too much of a commitment for him. Then we got Mark, and he was like "you guys are super lazy. Sign me up!"

MRR: Mark, how long have you been in the band?

Mark: Um, about two years now? Funny thing is, the first time I met Daniel he pissed on my couch.

Daniel: That is so not true!

Mark: He claims he spilled a beer on the couch while he was sleeping, but I think we all know that he pissed himself.

Daniel: This is so not true. I was staying with two of my really good friends who happened to be Mark's roommates. After a long night out on the town, I cracked open a tall boy on the couch and fell asleep. I woke up covered in Tecate, and Mark has been saying I pissed myself for years.

Mark: Definitely pissed himself. I wake up and this guy with his shitty mustache is sitting on my couch and pissed himself.

Daniel: I didn't have a mustache then! Oh wait, yeah I did.

Mark: Well, anyways that's how I met Daniel.

Daniel: I can remember you scowling at me. You had this look on your face that basically said, "This is the most disgusting person in the world and he is on my couch."

Greg: I met Daniel because Livids was in need of a drummer at the time, and they rest is history.

Mark: Greg, I saw your band in Milwaukee like ten years ago when

you were playing with Radio 4.
Greg: Oh, no way.

MRR: So tell me about how this record came to be.
Daniel: We recorded the record in August of 2015 with Bradley.
Greg: We recorded with our good buddy Phil Palazzolo in Dumbo, Brooklyn.
Daniel: Originally it was supposed to just be a demo, but we really liked how it came out, and we started asking around to see if anyone would be interested in putting it out.
Greg: We recorded ten songs live with almost no overdubs in about four hours. It was the fastest and most efficient recording session ever!
Daniel: We were pretty dialed in at that point and just ready to record. After we finished, a friend of the recording studio we recorded at played it for this small label called Ring The Alarm Records, and they were very interested in putting it out. The first red flag should have been when they asked us to get a lawyer. A friend of ours looked over the "contract" they sent over and told us it would be dumb to sign because they would essentially own our music. We are not a huge rock band here, so the whole thing was just kind of absurd and weird to us. After a lot of back and forth, they finally decided they did not want to put out the record, and it was blessing in disguise because that label totally sucks.
Greg: They were out to screw us over.

MRR: Haven't they heard of the ol' handshake deal?
Daniel: They even came out to New York to see us play and stroke our egos a bit. It was really stupid.
Greg: It turns out they were more of an advertising company and signing a punk band would have been a tax write off.
Daniel: Anyways, after they bailed we played a show with your band, Steve, Wilful Boys, at Cakeshop and that's how we got hooked up with Slovenly.
Greg: Slovenly put out a Livids single so we sort of had a relationship with Pete and Bazooka Joe already.
Daniel: Pete was at the show and saw us play, and he told me that night that he was really interested in doing a record with us and *voila*! They did it, and we are super stoked with how it all came out. My buddy Richard Vergez did the artwork, and Chad Williamson did the layout. I was also really stoked that Crypt Records legend Tim Warren mastered our record. He's been a part of so much awesome music and it was honor that he got to turn the knobs on our record.

MRR: So besides that awesome show you played with my band, what is the worst the show you guys have played?
Mark: Oh, it has to be the Punk Rock Bowling show we played.
Greg: Oh yeah.
Daniel: Hands down the worst. We played with a bunch of ska bands and everyone hated us.
Mark: Yeah we opened for this old New York ska band called Mephiskapheles and soon as we started playing we just completely cleared the room. It was a pretty decent size room and there were a lot of people there, but they were not into us at all.
Daniel: I can vividly remember this dude in a checkered tie and shorts ready to just skank the night away. Soon as he heard about 10 seconds of our first song he promptly turned around and left the venue. He was so bummed on us.
Greg: Yeah that was not a fun evening.
Daniel: I stayed for the rest of the fest and got to meet Vinnie Stigma and watch Flag from the stage. That almost made it worth it. But ultimately it was a pretty horrendous show for us.

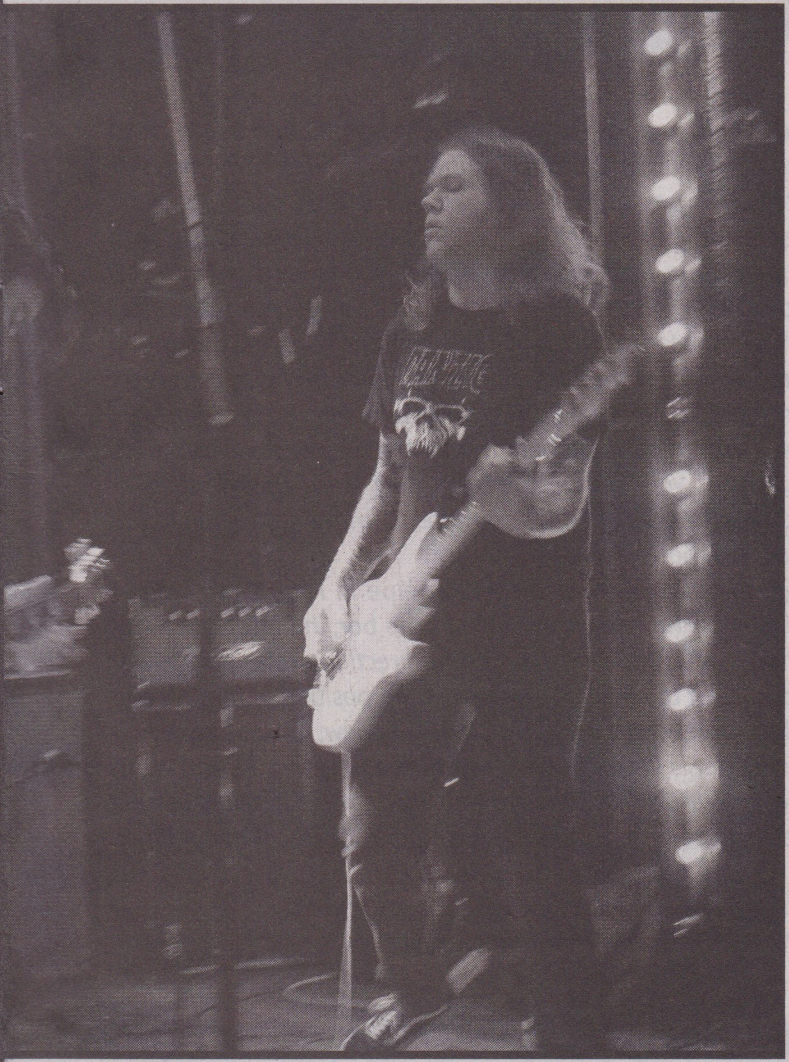
MRR: Here's a hard hitting question: do you guys have a go to sad record? Like, listening to a record to make yourself feel worse.
Greg: Oh man, I have so many.
Daniel: There are a lot of bum out Replacements songs that I go to for sure.
Greg: Probably Afghan Whigs' *Gentlemen*.
Mark: Elliott Smith.

MRR: Can't go wrong there! OK, who is the fastest person in the band at changing strings?
Daniel: Me, for sure.

MRR: That was sneaky segue into my next question: do you really change your strings before every show?
Daniel: I do. I think it sounds best.

MRR: That is crazy.
Mark: He also takes a giant shit before every show.
Greg: What!
Mark: I have told you this so many times!

MRR: Gotta get rid of that stage weight.
Daniel: What can I say? I like to take a giant steaming deuce before every show.
Greg: I like to drink, like a normal person!
Daniel: I briefly played in this band Re-Volts and Jack Dalrymple



turned me onto that pre-show string change deal. I just think it sounds best and I have been doing it ever since.
Greg: It's funny because in our last band, Livids, the other guitar player couldn't change a guitar string to change her life.
Daniel: Or stay in tune!
Greg: We did SXSW once and we had played six shows in three days. On the third day, as we are getting ready for the sixth show she suddenly had a moment of clarity that she might break a string at some point. Sure enough she did, and it was during our biggest show!
Daniel: We played the Fat Wreck Chords showcase and opened for Less Than Jake—yes, another ska band—and she broke a string mid-set and decided that we should all stand there in silence while she changes her string. I instead just ripped into the next song and paid her no attention.

MRR: So you guys are a three piece. If you had an additional guitarist and it could be anyone, who would it be?
Daniel: Vinnie Stigma, without a doubt. I've always been in two guitar bands, and while I do appreciate the sound I like the three piece.
Greg: I wouldn't mind if we had another guitarist.

MRR: Guys I think you blew this question, this is really about who the greatest rhythm guitarist is.
Greg: Alex Lifeson.
Mark: Me!

MRR: OK, this is really important: what are your thoughts on IPA beer?
Daniel: I go back and forth, but at the moment I am pretty down with them.
Greg: I couldn't care less. I drink shit beer. It's cheaper, I don't get as fucked up fast, and I don't sit around thinking about what my beer tastes like.
Mark: Everyone know the greatest beer in the world is Coors Banquet beer.
Daniel: Actually, I think I can speak for the whole band when I say that our ethos is that we will drink whatever is free.

MRR: So in a perfect world, what is the perfect amount of drink tickets a band should get on a rider?
Daniel: A case of beer for each band member.

MRR: That's a lot!
Daniel: Hey, you said in a perfect world.
Greg: I think bands should get a case of beer and a bottle of whiskey or something.
Mark: Decent whiskey.
Daniel: Most small clubs and stuff give you two drink tickets, if you are lucky. We just played at Monty Hall in Jersey City with Night Birds and Western Addiction, and they were extremely accommodating and awesome.

MRR: Needs to be in print who great that venue is and the people that run it.
Daniel: Totally! We also did a live set on their radio show Three Chord Monte there. It was a lot of fun, and they also took real good care of us.
Mark: The worst was at places like Grand Victory, RIP, where they gave you nothing at all. Instead they would give you like some sort of wrist band that gave you half off of certain things.
Greg: That's not a bad deal.
Daniel: I can tell you the least accommodating is Punk Rock Bowling. They didn't give us anything.
Greg: They also forced us to sit through Mephiskapheles, and no one should have to do that.
Daniel: I almost forgot. The singer of Mephiskapheles had his "manager" go to my girlfriend and give her his business card, because he wanted to hang out with her after the show. We all thought that was really funny. Good times!

MRR: So back to business. You guys have this new record out on Slovenly Records. What are your plans now?
Daniel: We are working on doing out of town shows in the near future. We have a lot of new material and would like to get around to recording new stuff soon. Life has gotten in the way of touring at the moment, but we are definitely working on getting that happening very soon.
Greg: We played a fest in Puerto Rico not that long ago, and I had never even been there before. It was pretty cool, and we'll hopefully be doing more stuff like that real soon.

MRR: Thanks gents, I'm gonna go get some Mexican food now.

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Cuntroaches

How many times have you gone to a show with expectations to see a band that might please you, let you control their sound, their appearance, or even what they say on stage. You pay the entrance fee and you demand a certain sound, quality, and entertainment. If the first minute of the set does not grab your attention, you ignore the rest. Luckily, there are still some bands in this world that are impossible to ignore. No matter what feelings you have after the first minute of their presence on stage, you just can't ignore the sound of this particular band. It's not something you can predict, and don't even try to be prepared. Cuntroaches will take you by surprise, believe me. Members of the band pretend to be nice and friendly, but this is just an illusion. It's tricky and it works against you. During their set, they show their real faces of uncontrolled creatures and by then it's too late to move out—things are getting ugly and you're trapped for good.

We missed each other, ridiculously, in a small kneipe in Kreuzberg; when I finally found them sitting in the tiny corner behind the bar, the interview went on for another few hours, often veering in different directions, roles and power positions changing, and even the investigated got in the position of investigator several times. So this is an excerpt version of the interview, as we know your precious time on this planet is limited. Check out their upcoming 7" and tours. I don't think you'll need your earplugs after the devastating ultra sonic assault executed by the one and the only Cuntroaches. The damage is already done.

Introduction and interview by Robert Refuse.
Photos by Durda from BlackGang Crew.

MRR: In the punk hardcore scene in Berlin, it's always hard to find people who actually were born in Berlin. As I can hear some foreign accents here, I want to ask you how you ended up in Berlin (at least the persons who were not born here)?

Martina: Well, I was born here. I went to London and studied there a little bit and then came back and just beached here like a whale. I always envisioned myself living somewhere else in the world but meeting Claire and David and all the other people who come to live here make it easy to stay.

David: I'm from Göteborg, where everyone wants to listen to heavy metal. No one is into the weird noise we did with Batalj so we decided to escape. Robin from Piss booked a show for us in Berlin, and that was our first vision of the outside world.

MRR: And you were so excited you thought, yes, I want to stay here for the rest of my life?

David: Then the seed was planted, and one year later we just decided to move, and now we're kind of stuck here.

Claire: I'm from Toronto. I was hired by an artist to come to Berlin to do some installation work. I have a classic moving-to-Berlin story: I met someone and got involved in a long distance relationship. Within 30 minutes of moving here, I realized it wasn't going to work out.

David: Typical.

MRR: How did you meet? At some place like this, or some show? Or how did this happen, that you thought "oh, these look like people I'll play in a band with for the next couple years?"

Claire: We met in the Czech Republic.

David: At Fluff Fest! Martina joined Batalj for a while and we played Fluff.

Claire: Yeah, I was there with the now defunct duo, Crime. I tagged along for a tour that included Fluff and randomly met these guys. Then the three of us played Fluff Fest as a band two years later.

Martina: Yeah, that was crazy fast.

MRR: This tent outside...?

David: Yeah, we played the Psych Tent. That's the best.

MRR: And people were "psyched?"

Martina: They were climbing all over the scaffolding.

Claire: They ripped down the sign.

MRR: So it was violent?

David: Maybe.

MRR: How did it happen that you started connecting with each other and talking about a possible band, or in your case, the anti-musical direction you've taken?

David: I don't know what anti-music means.

Martina: We got shitfaced and Claire was there, and we were really drunk and on the way home, on the way to the tram I said, "*Yeaaah*

Claire, let's start a band and we'll call ourselves the Cuntroaches" and Claire said "I'll play drums" and asked me "What are you gonna play?" and I said, "I'm gonna play *guitar*" and that's how we were born.

Claire: The exact words were "let's call ourselves the Cuntroaches, they live for five weeks without their heads."

Martina: If you cut off their heads they can survive for five weeks, and they would even be able to survive longer, it's just that they can't pick up food without their mouths. It's only about food, otherwise they don't need their brains. With that name, it'd be great to consist of 100 band members or more.

Claire: In the original constellation, we had a different bassist, Sarah of Die Pest. She was there with us on the street. I said yes because I always wanted to play drums and do that in a band. We were all coming from the same place at that point. So yeah, the whole—wait—what was your wording, "*non*"? Musical direction...?

MRR: Anti.

Claire: Well, yeah, I guess we were born out of anti-music. Then our bassist left because we were too "intense."

Martina: Shout out to Sarah!

Claire: We were military style, a two-person army.

MRR: Waking up at five in the morning?

Martina: Well, waking up at five in the afternoon... *[laughter]*

Claire: Rehearsing six days a week.

Martina: It's also when you start a band it's like you're newborn, it's like a new beginning in your life, and you feel so enthusiastic about it. You want to spend every waking moment with this new idea.

Claire: We had written these weird things as a duo, and David said, "Hey, I'm having this birthday party, I want you to play. Maybe I can come add some bass lines to your songs." Then one month later we played an eleven-minute show.

David: I got the impression that you, Martina, wanted to do more hardcore, but when I came to the first rehearsal, it was the noisiest thing I'd ever heard. You had a mic connected to the bass drum that was going through some synth and I thought "this is fucking amazing." At the time, I thought it would feel more natural to go the noisy weird way, rather than this cliché kind of way, and we ended up somewhere in between.

Martina: Yes, I wanted this hardcore band, but I never wanted this cookie-cutter hardcore. We always talked about hardcore with a twist, weird hardcore, like it's hard and brutal but you're also stimulated in a very different way than you would be with standard hardcore or this straight '80s hardcore. Just a different energy, but also not to become too niche-y. I love noise, but I also don't want to get too experimental with it. I would never want to cut out the noise factor, but I don't want to overdo the noise either.

MRR: Do you know where your limits are for experimentation and noise? Do you feel that in a more natural way? Do you feel "OK we're not going to go that far" because it's going to be something that you don't want to have in your sound? Because there's so much going on in your music, it could go in completely different directions, every record could be different.

David: Yeah, it's interesting, I feel the same way. I feel the demo is four completely different directions, the EP too in a way.

Martina: Was more black metal, yeah...

David: I don't think it was more black metal, but weird as the songs are kind of different. But also for the new recording, the new couple of songs we wrote, it's a new thing again.

Claire: It's not intentional, we don't sit down together and decide "we want to put a metal twist on this song," it just sort of happens.

David: I think we want to be kind of structured in a way, because we're all kind of controlling with the music, or we need to know there's an A part and a B part at least, something to follow. I don't think we're going into the "Aappa-esque," just a black hole of improvisation in terms of writing.

Claire: I guess a goal is to keep the sound raw. We've experimented with different noise elements, but we want to keep it stripped down, true to the original feeling.

MRR: There's definitely structure in your songs. I know that some of you are also into art—how is this connected with this type of art you create with the band? How much of your music is about deconstructing hardcore, how much of this is involved in creating the music?
David: I think it's hard to answer. Personally, you shouldn't really have deeper ideas when you write music. I think Martina does in the lyrics...?
Martina: No, not really. I think my lyrics are the most idiotic thing.
David: We sometimes have performative elements. We played a fundraiser for a DIY space in Sheffield where we brought a bunch of trash and there was a Canadian flag and an American flag in the trash, randomly, and then some punks found it and lit it on fire and threw it at the other band. Ah yeah, 'cause we didn't do it for our show, we threw it at the band before us, Lötfett!
Martina: Yeah, sometimes we have human footstools on stage. Once I ate a hot dog
Claire: We're interested in a lot more outside of the hardcore scene, and obviously this comes into play. I wonder if having been artists prior and now approaching music at this point in our lives lends itself to deconstruction—for instance, if I had always played drums, had every punk rhythm in the bank, this band could have taken a conventional direction, but because it was a new medium for me to work with, I'm figuring things out from an entirely different headspace rather than through a typical process.
Martina: That implies to my guitar playing, surely. A lot of hardcore bands have political motivations or messages, and I wouldn't say that my lyrics necessarily have a political message. *[laughter]* Everything is very, let's say "intuitive."

MRR: Is there any meaning behind the lyrics?
Martina: No. I wish there was meaning. *[laughter]*
Claire: But we have two songs—
Martina: Yeah? Which ones?
Claire: "Pig Woman," "Road Trip"...
Martina: Ah yeah, true. Some are about private things that happen. I used to work at a cheese store and there was this lady, she was a sickly woman. She would always call me up in the morning and ask me to take over her shifts, and what started out as a part-time job ended up being a painful full-time job, slaving at this smelly disgusting cheese store in a shopping mall. When I quit, the boss didn't even accept my resignation 'cause nobody else wanted that shit job. That song is called "Pig Woman," referring to my co-worker's daily calls
David: Back to the art thing, I like when bands do something a little bit more.
Claire: David's drawn posters for us, I did the artwork for the demo and the EP, we do our own merch.
David: Anytime we ask someone else to do something, it leads to disappointment. I should print that on my wall: delegation leads to disappointment.
Martina: So deep!
David: Thank you.

MRR: It's not easy to answer or discuss, because it's hard to describe how imagination works, how creative someone can be, how part of it can help some other part that is completely different.
Martina: When you're doing creative stuff, you always have a different perception of what authorship means to you. You don't want to follow what already exists, you just want to do something else.

MRR: Especially when some convention exists, doing art and then doing a band, it's music, it has limits, there are strict rules to follow, you have to end up somewhere after two minutes of doing whatever noise.
David: I think that's one interesting thing: we didn't have a clear-cut concept, ever. I remember a few times we tried to decide "where should we go?" and then we had some preferences, but in other bands, a lot of bands at the start they have this clear-cut "we're gonna sound like this or that." We have no idea, and I think it shines through our releases.
Martina: But is that good or bad?
David: Personally, I think it's the more interesting way to go. You never know what you're going to get.
Claire: But do you think that's because we were artists at the start, rather than musicians, per se?
David: Yeah, probably. I think a lot of it has to do with coming from different backgrounds. You just started playing drums and you [Martina] just started playing guitar and I just started playing bass too, we all experimented a lot. I think that's pretty cool.

MRR: You mentioned a military discipline going on within the band...
Martina: That was in the early stages, though.

MRR: But still I can see that in the impressive list of shows you already played with just one demo or two tapes, not waiting forever having some solid release out, just showing what you have to offer to the world with so many shows, a couple of tours a year.
Claire: We went on tour for our second show.

MRR: The second show was already a tour?
Claire: Yes.

MRR: So how did it happen, that you played so many shows all around Europe? From Hungary, to some Balkan countries, Poland, Czech Republic, also the UK, all these places. I know it's not that easy for European bands to tour so much around Europe because there are so many tours all the time, so did you book all these shows on your own? Do you have some strong connections?

Martina: We fed off Batalj's connections at first, and then made our own somehow. A lot of emailing.

Claire: And a lot of trust on behalf of promoters, assuming we would bring something brutal to the table, at least.

David: I think the first tour we did ourselves was with Bent Fest in London. We just wrote them and were like "*heeey*" and they were really into it, which is cool, seeing as we were a very new band. Some of it was Batalj, but also we just threw ourselves out there and it worked out pretty well.

MRR: How many times have you experienced the audience in total shock watching you being very loud and super intense and something that they never imagined exists in the world?

Claire: Er, maybe confusion is more apt...

Martina: People are so hard to shock these days. But easier to confuse.

David: I never look at the audience, so I don't know.

Martina: I mean, during the first year I regularly shat myself on stage because I'm screaming so much and then I kind of lost control over my body. That doesn't happen anymore...so... *[laughter]* I started wearing diapers but I don't need those anymore. I switched to hygienic pads.

David: Tampons. *[laughter]*

MRR: That's why you don't have many releases, you need that extra room in the van. Not much space for the merch.

Claire: There's a clip from a show in Mallorca where Martina had her worst shitting episode. She's so stiff, trying to hold everything in.

Martina: It came all up, but I was wearing two underpants and really thin, white cloth-y Mallorca pants...well...that underwear couldn't be saved. David suggested leaving them on stage.

MRR: I think people like me who are just coming for the shows, to watch the bands and maybe say they were really good or maybe complain, they have no idea how much bands are sacrificing to be on stage, just to give us something, to share what they are doing with us, the audience.

Martina: Especially when you're going on a three-week tour, and you plan to bring roughly three pairs of underpants, because that's tour standards: three weeks equal three underpants. If that answers your question.

MRR: Being a band in Berlin can also mean being segregated in different small scenes. Do you feel there are certain people or bands that come to you that you feel you belong to in this city? There can be so much stuff going on here.

Martina: Not yet. But I think it's coming. Also the direction of the music that we're doing is growing. We're definitely not alone.

David: Yeah.

Claire: We're a bit chameleon-like.

David: We get invited to play a lot of various shows like metal festivals and arty stuff. But I still think we personally identify with hanging out with the local hardcore scene. That doesn't mean that we want to play exactly that music. We do get to play a lot of hardcore shows. For example, at the end of March, we play with Urchin.

MRR: What are your favourite places to play in Berlin?

Martina: Apart from being Koma F's house band...?

Claire: I really wanna play Abstand.

David: Yeah, we're trying to get that. I don't know, we just keep on playing the same places, like Bei Ruth, West Germany and Köpi. I really like Trixxter and Villa Kuriosum.

Claire: Rauchhaus was cool. We played in the hallway.

MRR: Is there something you find annoying with the Berlin scene, something that should be improved, in a sense that you compare it to past experiences and you think "well, that should be organized in a different way" compared to your past local scenes in Canada and Sweden?

David: Nah, but if we put it in a worldly hardcore-perspective, I think sometimes it's a bit too much focus on what's "right" and "cool," whether it's bands, labels, lists or whatever. It creates a hierarchy where only certain styles are accepted and I find that really boring. Can't say much about Sweden because I haven't been living there for eight years. But we did a small tour and all venues and organizers were really amazing!

Claire: I can only speak for the queercore scene in Toronto during the Will Munro era, a sex pit of bands and art and gay underground shit. I think a lot of European hardcore scenes could be less of a boys' club, more queer and less white. Less uptight, more weird.

Martina: People take themselves so serious most of the time. That's boring. Just spice things up a bit. Risks.

Claire: We don't take ourselves so seriously.

David: Definitely shouldn't take ourselves too seriously when playing that metal show.

Claire: Yeah, what if we get banned from the metal scene?

Martina: Hopefully.

MRR: What if you get banned from the other scene for playing that metal show? Like the squats...

Claire: You think so?

Martina: Hopefully.

MRR: Are there any bands you'd like to recommend from Berlin that people reading this interview should check out?

Claire: I like the Exit Group demo.

David: Stinkhole.

Claire: Robin from Piss started playing in Occvlta. I went to see their show and thought they were doing something interesting.

Martina: Mülltüte. Hure, very rough and industrial.

David: Yeah, Hure is definitely one of the best Berlin bands at the moment!

MRR: Robert Collins in an *MRR* review wrote that you are the "most life affirming band in the world." What's your day to day life? Where's this affirmation in your day to day life? Outside of the band.
Claire: We live for Robert Collins. He sent us our first fan email.

MRR: So what are you doing outside the band?
David: Masturbating.
Martina: We have pets. Claire has a cat, David has two cats and I have a dog.
David: You also have two cats.
Martina: Yeah, I also have two cats.

MRR: So are you a pro-dog or a pro-cat band?
Martina: 50 / 50.
David: I have a fish bowl. But I don't have anything in it. So I'm neutral.
Martina: What kind of pets do you have?

MRR: Right now nothing.
Martina: Are you a cat man?

MRR: Not at all. Absolutely pro-dog. To the point that no cat will be accepted at my place. I'm so pro-dog.
David: I'm pro-life.
Claire: There's the life affirmation!
David: That was a joke, by the way.

MRR: That should be the title of the interview. So what are you doing with your lives?
David: Nothing.
Claire: Finishing an overdue project.
David: Aren't you tattooing, too?
Claire: Yes, please pay me money for tattoos.
Martina: And you?

MRR: This is your interview, not mine. What does the future hold for Cuntroaches?
Martina. We have a bunch of shows coming up. Mini-tour with Urin, David's new project. Playing at DGTL FMNSM, Wolf City Festival and supporting Urchin, which is gonna be sick.
Claire: We have a three-week tour coming up in the UK, France, Italy and Switzerland. And there'll be a release party for the 7" organized by Teratology and Instruments of Discipline.
David: We have these new tracks we wanna release straight to vinyl. Cool, huh?

MRR: Has there been some trouble with releasing this 7"?
David: Yeah, we wrote some labels when we recorded it but no one got back to us.
Martina: Oink oink. *[laughter]*

MRR: They'll regret it in a year or two.
Martina: We'll see about that.
David: Probably not. Think it's kinda funny though.

MRR: But any responses at all?
David: Well, we sent our stuff to the labels that we like and either got "this is too noisy" or radio silence. I guess we're a bit of a wild card for what they usually release, so I'm not surprised. Ah yeah, but Voice From Inside did a bootleg of both the demo and EP!

MRR: How about those labels that wanna put you out?
David: Yes! So finally our EP is gonna be released on 7" by Teratology and Instruments of Discipline. Two Berlin-based labels active in a lot of different scenes and music styles. I didn't know much about these labels. After checking out what they're doing I got really excited. 'Cause they're doing cool shit, everything from metal to electronic stuff.
Martina: We're also going be on a compilation released by Burger Records.
Claire: And aren't they mostly into garage stuff?
David: We always fall in between chairs. I really like that.

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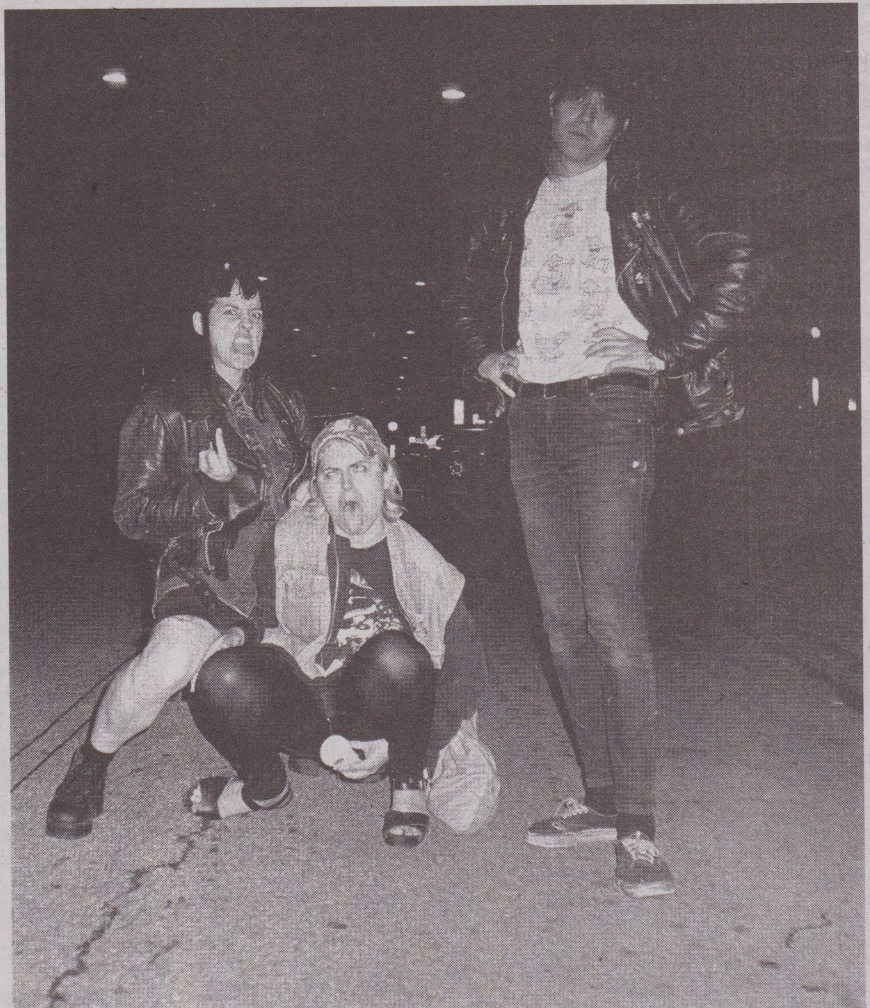

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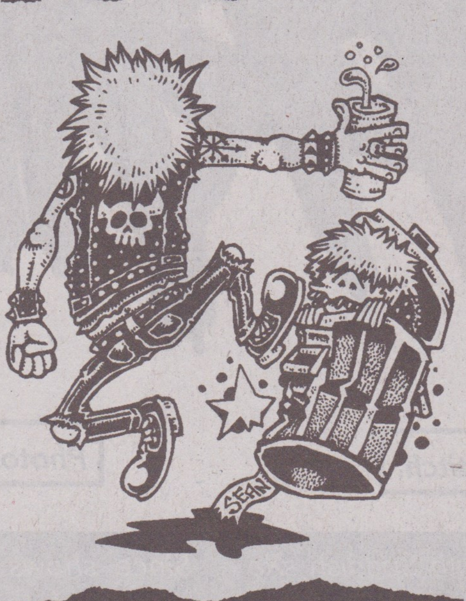

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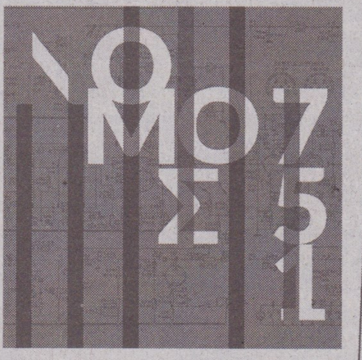

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APPRAISE

Interview by Martin Stitch.

Photos provided by the band.

The first time I made contact with Spanish sXe hardcore was in 2005 when I put up a show for the Defense from Barcelona. The Defense had just released (or were about to) an album on Crucial Response Records that they wanted to promote. As far as I know, they had made plans for playing several venues across Europe but somehow ended up driving over a thousand miles solely for the show I did in the Middle of Nowhere, East Frisia. Even though I don't remember much except mediocre attendance and a cover of Better Than A Thousand's "Self Worth," that evening must have made a lasting impression on me because only a few months later I was on a one-way flight to the Iberian Peninsula.

While my initial plan had been to start my own super hot youth crew band in the city of Barna, I ended up being a nanny to some rich kids in a place I had never heard of before, called Zaragoza. Between house servants, full diapers, and people eating bananas with forks and knifes, my living conditions did not exactly qualify as punk. (Except maybe for the Ramones, that happened to be the shit among affluent Spaniards at that time.) Still, I felt more at odds than ever and was desperate for company when I finally crossed paths with the local sXe movement, which, together with me, fit in one Mercedes Vito.

Since shows were scarce in Zaragoza, we often used that van to drive to Barcelona, where half of the city's youth was into HC punk. It was great. A total hardcore frenzy. Overcrowded shows, at times two in a row, bands popping up everywhere and others flying in from Central Europe or the States only to play one night. BCNSXE ruled. In the middle of it all was a huge guy called Gabi who ran the label Cycle Records and would some years later front the youth crew band Appraise. Lately though, people probably think less of sXe when they hear Barcelona and more of the drive for Catalan independence that gained momentum last fall.

After a referendum was held despite government threats, there is now a warrant out for the region's former president, who fled to Belgium. Since the whole question seems rather complicated to me, I thought it'd be worth contacting Appraise to get some first-hand intel on the issue and, since we were already on it, talk about their views on sXe, growing up, and their upcoming tour with Cutting Through.

Appraise consists of Joan Cinder, Gabi, Matt, Eric and Sergi.

MRR: OK, I thought maybe we could start with a short wrap-up of your city's HC history.

Gabi: Basically, the sXe bands from BCN—not that there were so many—are Refraining and Afterlife, whose singer later started the Defense. Then there were Shorebreak, Hopeful, 24 Ideas, but that was earlier, maybe '91 / '93. What else? Xmilk. But now we're talking about things that happened between '92 and '96. And that's stuff we didn't witness.

Joan: The end if anything.

Gabi: What had happened in Barcelona was that there were all these very active people who, for some reason, stopped being active and vanished. And then there was no more hardcore in Barcelona.

Joan: They weren't active for many years. Maybe three or four—from '94 to '98. And when we came in, all those bands stopped.

MRR: When it stopped the moment you came in, how exactly was your initiation with both hardcore punk and sXe then?

Gabi: I found out about HC punk through my older brother Dani, who would be listening to all types of music. He played in some of the melodic punk rock bands right before the boom in the mid '90s. For that reason, I ended up going to those early Epitaph / Fat Wreck Chords tours in Barcelona. I was a preteen then. However, I wasn't involved, I was just consuming music. A few years later, I started going to smaller shows where I would meet people of my age. We became friends and discovered much more about hardcore, punk, DIY, sXe, and so on.

Joan: But as we just said, when we stepped in, around '97 / '98, there was a void, people lost interest and vanished. So, we end up being a bunch of teenagers with no resources but a strong will to turn things around. So that's what we did.

MRR: By the time I came to Spain, some ten years later, I had the impression that you guys and your label Cycle were at the center of everything...

Gabi: Well, we were a part of it, yes. But regarding Cycle as a label: every time we released a band, we lost money. Records not being sold and so on. We ran it for some years and then stopped, and now we have Can't Keep Us Down, where we help to release records every now and then. Basically, what we used to do as Cycle we now do a little bit as CKUD.

Joan: It's more or less the same, but it's working better.

Gabi: Maybe now that we're older we know better how to do it. But it's the same. If we like a band, for example now we're all in Appraise and Robert Refuse puts out our LP, we make a co-release. That way we can distribute it in the south of Europe. Which is basically what we did with Cycle, you know. And the same with Collapse, where Joan sings and Eric plays drums. Or Poder De Cambiar, which is a 7" we put out. Well, it's basically the same with a different name. Cycle was a financial ruin. And CKUD not so much. At least for now.

MRR: When I came to Barcelona it was the first time that I perceived a true… like, pan-European HC scene. You know, people wearing shirts of Crucial Response bands instead of Revelation Records. So, for want of a better name, I experienced a European hardcore pride.

Joan: I think it's because it was always much easier for bands from Europe to come down to Barcelona or for bands from the Peninsula to tour, than it was for bands from abroad. You know, the first sXe band that came to play in Barcelona was Good Clean Fun. I don't think that it's a question of pride or anything, but one of access. It's just what people saw more.

Matt: I think for bands from the US it's always risky to come to Spain. Unlike the UK, where it's pretty safe that you can play a lot of great shows.

Joan: *Claro*. In central Europe, you have short distances and shows work out pretty well. In Spain, you have to drive long distances and you don't know what's going to happen. Lately shows are good, though.

Matt: Yeah, shows are good, but often people don't know that and many bands from the States have never been there.

MRR: My experience in Germany has been that it's pretty ok with local bands. But when someone from the US comes on tour perception changes. Then it's something else. Like true hardcore, if you know what I mean. I didn't have the impression that this was so much the case in Spain.
Joan: I think it is true that there is a greater appreciation of local bands. That is, a local band from Barcelona might have more success than maybe a local band in Germany. You know what I'm saying? Because a lot of local bands play there and they have great shows. But it's like I said before: since foreign bands don't usually come, people support what they got. When Justice came to play their first shows in the early 2000s, Cinder *[Joan's old band]* had a lot better shows than they did... Justice started to have good ones in the Fire And Ice. But the shows before that...

MRR: I remember one night when Cinder played two shows in a row. One I think with Justice and then another in some park. That was incredible..
Joan: Yeah! There was a boom and then it went south. *Ffffiiiiu*.

MRR: It was a fashion, right?
Joan: Yeah. *Bah!* Total hype. And in fact, most of the people who supported OCTW weren't even sXe.
Gabi: It was...Well, sXe was a popular thing from 2004–2010, I would say. Lots of people were edge and then changed.

MRR: So, *you* are the BCNSXE now?
Joan: Well, there are a few more.
Gabi: Talking of sXe in Barcelona, there might be fifteen people.
Joan: Yeah, maybe.

MRR: Do you notice a difference in the way people treat you, now that you're reduced to a handful?
Gabi: Well, to be honest, I don't care at all. I guess people treat us the same way. Or at least, it should be like that. Nice people are nice people. Be they sXe or drinking. It's just common sense. I never choose to like people for being sXe, like a crew thing.

Joan: That period was great. Now it's somewhere in between. Don't know...It's stable. Neither very good nor very bad. A problem that we often talk about is that there's almost no one between the generation of those who are 30 / 32 / 33, which would be us, and those who are now 22. Very few. Those in between, there are some, but most of them are gone.

MRR: What happened to those who disappeared? The last time I was there it seemed that you had a huge movement. Half of the city was sXe.
Joan: No one knows. With some we are in contact, but in general we don't know. There were more people back then because there were more sXe bands when you were there, which was 2007?

MRR: Right. It was when Out Come The Wolves still played. I remember passing by the singer's store, Trust Nobody, before one particular show and being surprised by the mass of HC people hanging out there.

MRR: As I am approaching my 30s now, I realize how much HC punk and sXe have had a lasting impact on me. More than I had anticipated, I think. How do you experience growing older as a youth crew band?
Gabi: Well, maybe we should delete the "youth" from the term. Just kidding! I mean, we feel as young as before but yeah, let's say we think twice about how to do things. Like, let's make it right and get the most out of everything. Every time we play, it's something special. Especially in HC punk, where things are so ephemeral. A band can be started in the blink of an eye, but things can end just as fast. So, yeah, it's not that we think "we're hardcore DIY," but that's how we grew up, obviously. Our values come from there and we are proud of it.

MRR: And apart from your business with Appraise, do you still identify as hardcore or punk?
Gabi: Don't get me wrong with what I am going to say next. *I do love hardcore punk*. And I mean it. With that being said, there are many things happening in the "scene" that I can't identify

with (or rather, that I really dislike). We have fucked up attitudes. Elitism, machismo, classism, all those prejudices. Judging people for their aesthetics for example. One of the things I loved when I got into hardcore was the feeling of acceptance. Everyone was welcome if you stuck to one simple rule: do not come here looking for trouble. It became the best shelter for me. It let me grow up to become who I am today. It's still a super special place where I feel all of that, but those spaces definitely are getting less. I do not expect HC punk to be perfect, but I do really expect people to talk about what's going on. In the end, we are just emulating the society we despise.

MRR: In Berlin, where I live, the scenes are pretty splintered. It's almost like every genre has its own venue and crowd. Do punk and hardcore go still hand in hand in Spain?
Joan: In Madrid, hardcore and punk are a somewhat closer. Which wasn't the case before.
Gabi: And in Barcelona, the opposite is happening. It has always been more mixed, and now it's more divided. It's become very difficult to make them coexist, you know?
Matt: Everyone. Punk, hardcore, metal...
Gabi: It's like this: you can go to a hardcore show, a punk, metal or beatdown show. You name it. But it's all different things. And maybe at the hardcore and punk shows you can see ten or fifteen people that go to both. But there are 50 that only go to punk shows or only to hardcore shows. And that didn't happen before. You went to see Cinder, and among the 200 people in the crowd, you had crusts, punks, some sXe, some more skinhead, someone totally hardcore or people who listened to, let's say NOFX, Bad Religion, Pennywise. Everyone in the same room. Now it's difficult that something like this happens.

MRR: And that's a phenomenon of Barcelona?
Gabi: I think it happens everywhere. Maybe in Andalucia they're still mixed.
Joan: I think in smaller towns people come together more than in big cities.

MRR: Would you say that sXe is another line of division?
Gabi: It could be. But right now sXe is super small, so it's not even possible to consider it a division.

MRR: Anyways. What's dividing Spain right now ain't the question of doing drugs or not, I guess. Let's talk about the secession. After media reported surprisingly little about the drastic measures applied by Spanish forces during the vote, they soon painted a picture of a united people, masses on the streets speaking out against the secession everywhere...Could you give an update on the latest events and the current situation?
Gabi: Ok, the situation is really difficult to explain in a few lines, but I will try my best. Three months have passed since the "referendum" of October first. The population (us) has suffered brutal attacks that day and the days after. The government sent around 16,000 soldiers to Barcelona. Just to make sure they could "hold" the situation.

Let's make things clear: Some people want Catalonia to be a new country, some people don't, others don't care. However, people really want to be able to choose. There have been efforts to get a "legal" referendum for years. The Spanish government has been denying this and punishing proponents, incarcerating or fining politicians as well as normal people. Madrid has been using this conflict to keep attention away from issues it has on its own. Corruption is a huge problem here in Spain. At the end, they have a strategy and they are getting the results they were expecting.

MRR: Does Appraise as a band have a common position, or do the dividing lines also run through the band?
Gabi: As a band, I would say that we would like to split ways with Spain since we have been suffering their corruption, their laws against workers...Right wing politics in general. I think some have a different level of enthusiasm about it but a similar view.

MRR: From what I hear, it seems that Catalan independence is uniting the Left and the Right somehow. If so, it sounds like a rather odd single-purpose coalition. Would you say that it's a cause worth dealing with the devil for?
Gabi: Some people are just dreaming about going independent and not really giving thought to how it would be after claiming a new country. That's it. The movement in Catalonia is heavily carried by the right wing. The Left has been working together with the right to be strong enough to be able to secede from Madrid. The consequences of it? Nobody knows. But one thing is sure: This coalition is going to have a cost. Giving all the power to the Right won't bring any advantages for the working class. So far, it seems that things are going to be the same. At least for a while... The right wing is going to defend its interests and the working class will lose any right for justice and freedom.

MRR: Back to punk. You have a new 7" out on Refuse Records and just mounted this year's edition of the Can't Keep Us Down fest. Tell us about both.
Gabi: We have a six-song 7" on Refuse. It's called *Leap of Faith*. It took us a while to do it since we had some ups and downs in our lives, but the record came out pretty well. It's the most solid Appraise material so far. Can't wait to play those songs live extensively!
Joan: The CKUD fest has been amazing. Eighteen bands, three days of hardcore punk of every type. People from all over Europe, South and North America visited us. It's really crazy to think that something that we started a few years ago as something not serious at all is now appealing to such an amount of people. We feel blessed about it and are very much looking forward to next year's edition.

MRR: After a tour you had mapped out got cancelled this winter, I hear that you are now preparing for another one with Cutting Through from Oregon. What happened to the first, what are the plans for the coming one, and what's your connection to the guys of Cutting Through?
Joan: The tour in December didn't happen because we got almost 60% of the dates cancelled. At one point we only had shows during the week and not a single weekend, which normally are the best days to tour. So we called it off.
Gabi: Instead we are doing these three weeks with CT, who we share labels in Europe with (Refuse Records and CKUD). Some of us have been friends for many years. Kyle was in Get The Most, and I toured with them when they came over in 2008. Plus, I've been quite often in the US Northwest, where we became good friends. I am also friends with Mike from the Fired Up days and some of us are in a band called Constrict that played a few shows around Fluff Fest with Safe and Sound who are also CT guys.

MRR: Well, I think that's about it. Anything left out?
Gabi: *Bueno, que el sXe seguirá más con menos gente, pero seguirá.*

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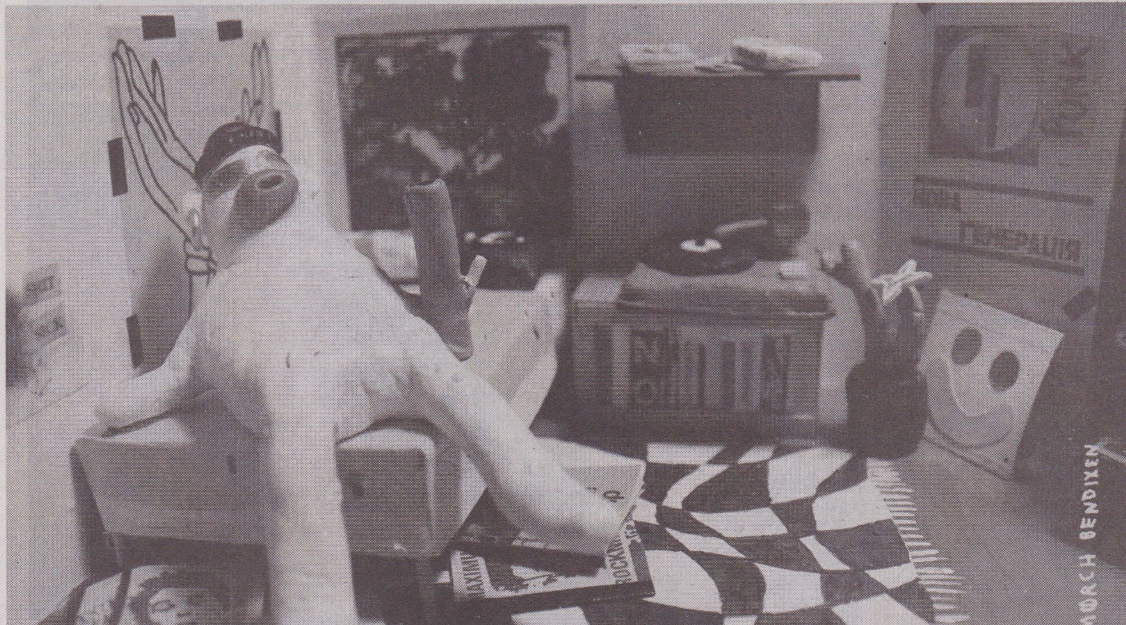

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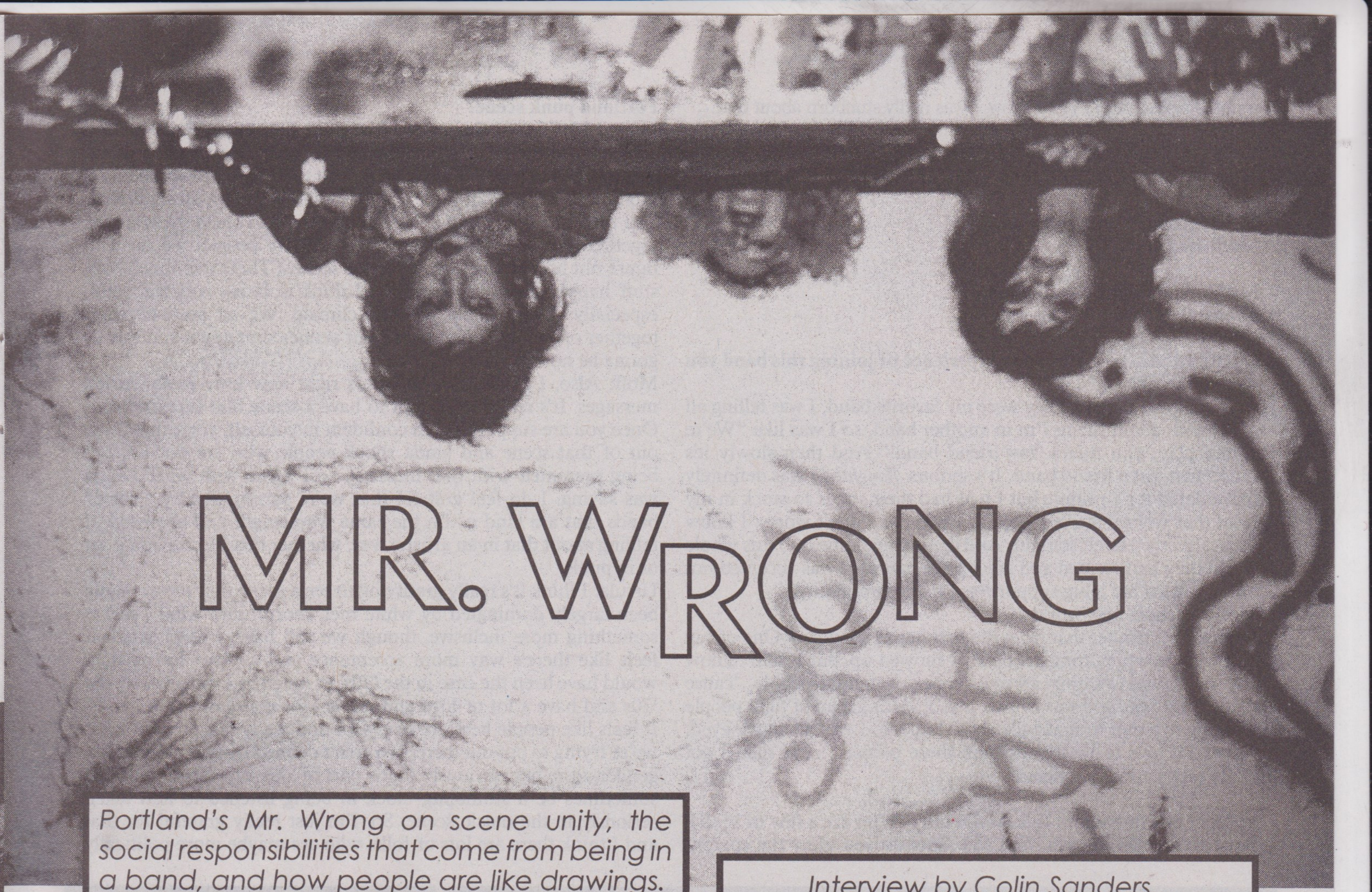

MR. WRONG

Portland's Mr. Wrong on scene unity, the social responsibilities that come from being in a band, and how people are like drawings.

Interview by Colin Sanders.. Photos by Sknkb0i and Corbin Corbin.

MRR: Band history. How did y'all first meet?
Ursula: Moff and I met at a house show. We played as a two-piece for a while when we started the band, and then we met Leona at our first show that we played as a two-piece.
Moff: They joined the band nine months after that.

MRR: Moff and Ursula, what do y'all remember about meeting each other?
Moff: I remember seeing Ursula around the neighborhood and thinking "that person seems cool, we should be friends!" I think it was fall 2014 that we met at that house show, we were reading the same book and connected on that. Was it *Girls To The Front*?
Ursula: Yeah.
Moff: And then we ran into each other again at Habesha. We talked that night about playing music together. It happened really fast after that. We lived five blocks from each other, so it was really easy to meet up. At the time, I was living in a basement where all the gear was, so it was a practice any time sort of deal. Which was really helpful since we were both learning the instruments that we play in Mr. Wrong. It was really valuable to practice at any time. We played with other people who lived in that house, but we ended up on the two of us.

MRR: What were the first shows like?
Ursula: The first show we played was at the house Moff and I lived and practiced in. It was probably not typical of a first show in that there was a fairly large amount of people there. I was definitely really nervous.
Moff: Just a big show with a lot of art.
Leona: I remember it really well. It was a packed room. And I was standing on the back of the couch trying to see. *[to Moff]* And you were wearing a baseball hat you would always wear at shows.
Ursula: That was your style then.
Leona: I remember I loved it immediately because it was raw and real and the harmonies were killer and everyone was into it and then afterwards I was a little bit intimidated but then you, Moff, were floating around the whole party, you could not stop smiling. Then I remember I sat and talked to you for a really long time about music and the world. It was immediately a deep conversation, and I was like "OK, I like them"

MRR: Leona, had you met Moff and Ursula before?
Leona: No. I just saw them play and was drawn over like a magnet.
Moff: I remember running into you by the doorway to the basement and you were like "if you need a bass player!" And I wasn't prepared for that.
Leona: I don't remember saying that but I am so glad I did! *[laughter]*
Moff: That show will always be one of my favorite that we've played because I feel like a lot of seeds were planted, just in community organization. We had something like ten people showing art, everything from video installation to pen and ink drawings, we got to play with Steel Chains, which was a huge honor, and so many people came out from different circles. It was really exciting.

MRR: How long were you a band before Leona joined?
Moff: Nine months.
Leona: Of shows.
Moff: Nine months of shows, but we played together six to eight

months before we played a show. I was really stubborn about that.

MRR: Around what year did y'all start practicing?
Moff: Winter of 2015? I think we met in fall 2014.

MRR: And the first show was?
Moff: January of 2016.

MRR: And then Leona joined…?
Leona: September of that year.

MRR: Leona, how was your experience of joining this band you were a fan of?
Leona: It was unreal! They were my favorite band, I was telling all my friends about them. I'm in another band, so I was like "We're gonna play with them! Yay friend band!" And then slowly it's more than just a friend band. It's serious. *[laughter]* I was definitely intimidated for a minute but I had had their songs so stuck in my head that when I started playing I was like "don't worry, I know them already." It felt so right. And they brought me into this whole world they had created and are a huge part of. I was accepted not only by them but a big supportive artistic community.
Moff: A whole new world.
Leona: I remember that from the first house show too. One of my best friends was putting art up so I showed up, but I didn't know anyone. I was walking around, sober, watching people, 'cause that's what I do, and was in awe, this obvious group of tight people working together to make the show happen. I was all starry eyed: "wow, I'd love to be friends with these people." And then I got really lucky and it happened!

MRR: Let's talk about this community. Who are a few of y'all's favorite Portland bands, and also how do you view the current Portland punk scene?
Leona: My biggest thing I feel like we're fighting in Portland and probably everywhere is that the scenes become these individual scene circles. There's a punk scene and there's a goth scene and a hip-hop scene, and all these scenes exist but they're all separated. So I think the cool thing of the future now is to blend these scenes together. We've got all these crazy creative people; we need to figure out how to integrate all those scenes! There's so much cool stuff happening in Portland that I think isolating is detrimental, especially in this grisly political climate. We all need to work together or we're gonna have all our venues shut down and there's gonna be no fun.
Moff: Also, I think a lot of bands right now have really strong messages. It's really important to have a scene that supports you. Once you are supported and confident in yourself, you can branch out of that scene and kinda shock people who are not used to being presented with that message, so I agree with what Leona was saying. I do feel grateful that we're surrounded by a lot of bands that are kind of on the same wavelength and are good at talking about that in an artistic way, whether that be individual art or in punk.
Ursula: I think it's really gratifying to see a scene that's historically been largely dominated by white men morph into what I feel is something more inclusive, though we still have a ways to go. It feels like there's way more acceptance and a place for us than would have been the case in the '70s, as much as I romanticize the '70s and have a lot of love and respect for many of those bands. It feels like people here are ready for and really receptive to what we're trying to put out there. We aren't defined by how we identify gender-wise, but obviously that's part of our experience and can sometimes be a stumbling block in being listened to and taken seriously in the music scene. So, I'm just really grateful for that and I think there are lots of folks who are maybe more politically

conscious or whatever who have come here from different places because they know that Portland has gotten a reputation for being a some sort of refuge folks who are different. We have a lot of work to do on that front but it makes me feel hopeful that we can support each other in this community here and that people can be heard. Again, it's definitely not perfect but it feels like a positive thing.

Leona: Everything I could look for I can find here. But the circles are a little too insulated, and it's hard to break out. It's easy to find the thing and then get stuck in it. But a lot of people are trying to break through that. There are so many artists with a message, not all the messages are the same, but there's so much intersection between everyone's struggles and the things we're trying to sing about, you can have a bill with totally different types of bands and they still fit together. That, to me, is a good sign. People need to challenge the things they see here. There are a lot of problems in Portland: there's a lot of drug addiction, depression, a housing crisis, a racist history, and a lot of police violence. These are things that affect you and affect everyone differently, but learning how to speak about them together is important. There are a lot of people coming here trying to live differently. Everyone is trying to find something here.

Moff: Doing things on your own terms—which is the punk ethos, right? It might not look punk, but it is. Like, "look punk" in quotation marks.

Ursula: If there's not a scene already built for you, you create it.

Moff: There's space for that, and there's a lot of support for it too. Which, going back to your question, I would say that Portland is doing that really well, and I'm really grateful for that. People applaud other folks just kind of doing their own thing.

Leona: There's a lot of support. It's been almost overwhelming to realize how many people I know that are willing to help me, to have my back or help put out a tape or collaborate with me or do art. Maybe I'm naïvely saying it, but a lot of people are trying to lift each other up, using what we do have to help each other out. That's what we need moving forward. We all need to help lift each other up.

Ursula: I wanna do the favorite bands!

Moff: Can we have a number? That would help.

MRR: Three.

Ursula: Fuck. Um, Vog, Dark/Light, the Stops, Plastic Weather.

Leona: No one is surprised: Lithics. And then I really like Haley Heynderickx, everything that she does. I appreciate people who are very much themselves, even when it's not the stereotypical what you would think of as a musician. She's quiet, soft-spoken, self-deprecating, hilarious, wonderful...

Ursula: I didn't know we were saying things about them! *[laughter]*

Leona: I won't say anything else! And then...Mala Fides.

Moff: Negative Option. This newer band, Ex-Kids! Lost Nerves!

Leona: The Social Stomach!

MRR: What do y'all view as Mr. Wrong's social responsibilities as a band? What do you think you owe people as being a band? As being your band?

Ursula: Honesty. We wanna be addressing real issues that we face. We're not offering escape music. Maybe someone can listen to us and be stoked and it can put them in a good mood and that would be great if so. I'm not saying "we have to be depressing as fuck!" It just seems really difficult when to be all "surf and sun! babes and smoking weed!" when there's so much shit going on. Aside from that, I would love to help foster inclusive spaces. I don't know if we're doing the best we could be at that, but I feel like at times, people can connect with our message in some way that makes them feel validated or maybe our shows are sometimes able to be safer spaces than some other shows. That would be my hope.

Moff: I was gonna say something along the same lines. As a band, what we could give back is what we have received, which is support and feeling like you can occupy spaces. Before being in a band, I went to shows a lot. You can kind of feel invisible if you don't have a platform. A huge part of being in a band for me was rectifying that pattern and using music to create community.

Leona: Having this platform. This band has helped me learn how to call things out when I see them, and to speak even when I'm scared of what the ramifications are. If something is happening at one of our shows that we don't like, I feel this responsibility now to say something about it. Even when it doesn't come out in a good way, I know that I have the support; people will help and back me up and decompress with me afterwards about what happened. That's been a really big area of growth for me, and will continue to be.

It's still hard for me to go up and tell someone that I have a problem with their behavior or try to interrupt unsafe behavior. And stop trying to protect these fragile...it's usually men. Male egos. Sorry I don't want you to throw elbows in the pit where everyone's dancing and not moshing. The biggest responsibility I feel is to the people we bring in to our shows. So they know they can come to us, say that they're seeing something or feeling unsafe and then have a response. And that younger folks know that there's older people out there that have their back.

Moff: That's super important. And I can't think of a band that was like that when I was in my earlier 20s and late teens that I saw and felt like "oh, when I go to this band's they're not going to tolerate shitty hyper-masculinity so therefore this space is safer." I'm sure there were bands doing that, I just didn't happen to know of them.

Leona: We want to talk to people about the stuff we're making music about. We're making music about issues that are important to us. And hopefully starting a conversation about things. Especially on tour, the conversations we have with people are really inspiring. People would be like "Like let's talk about gentrification. The same stuff that's happening in Portland is happening over here." People wanna talk to us about the intense things that we're writing songs about. We're just getting more political and raising more issues, and hopefully our shows will be a venue for more of that kind of discussion. Rather than getting up there and presenting anything like we know it and are done, I hope it's like "Here's where we're at but we want to grow and change and talk and involve everyone in our growth process."

MRR: Is there anything you might like to tell men in the scene that they might not understand or hear from someone else?

Moff: Just going through all the file cabinets...no, I'm not the singer.

Ursula: One of the things I would say is femme / non-binary / non cis-man musicians are not cute or a novelty. Also, we are not going anywhere. As a femme-presenting band, we have had many conversations about how rad it would be if we and our peers weren't so often defined by our assumed gender and the stereotypes that generally come with that. Another note is to be appreciative when a femme or non-binary person takes the time to patiently explain their experience to you because we expend a lot of emotional energy to do that, and it's not always our job to do that, so if somebody is trying to teach you or tell you their experience, listen to them.

Leona: In that same vein, and this goes for everyone, there's some things that you're not going to understand. You don't need to try and compare it to something you do understand, you can just say "oh, I don't know what that's like." And that's fine. It's not saying that "this person I'm talking to doesn't understand oppression" or doesn't understand what it's like to be judged or what it's like to not fit in. But there are certain facets of oppression that are incomparable, and we need to learn to shut up and listen to the person who experiences it.

I get really frustrated too that Girl Rock, or Girl-Fronted, isn't a genre. Saying we're good for girls isn't a compliment. And could we not force gender on me for like ten seconds? Also if other people could do the work to unlearn those stereotypes, that would be really cool. People can know that cognitively, but it still comes out.

I'm gonna be extra on edge to the cis guy at the music store explaining gear to me that I understand or don't understand. I'm gonna be extra on edge to someone asking to carry my gear. I'm gonna have a bunch of reactions about that. I've spent so long defending the notion of myself as a musician, both internally and externally. I've had to justify it to myself so many times that when somebody comes along and makes a comment they probably didn't even realize, it's gonna hit me harder.

Moff: I think certain groups having to prove their worth to a scene that is dominated by men is a very real problem and sometimes that will be validated by random tests. The amount of times I've heard stories or had the experience of my music knowledge being questioned or used against me...Like, "oh, you don't know this thing, so obviously you're not a real whatever." That needs to be a thing of the past. Also, as Ursula stated, recognizing that it takes a lot of emotional energy to explain perspectives and that listening goes a long way.

Leona: And taking people's experience seriously. The response, "I'm sorry you're bummed." No!

Moff: It's embarrassing to be called out. No one likes it. But it's necessary for us all to become better people. Like trying to draw something. The first time you suck at it, and you have to draw it over and over again and look at your mistakes in order to realize what you did wrong to make the drawing better. That was a really bad analogy.

Leona: It was a good one!

Ursula: I like that!

Moff: We are all drawings! We can all do better always.

Leona: Learning how to gracefully accept being called out is such an important part. Learning how to be called out. How to call out. There's so many different elements of it. It's practice.

Ursula: Assuming that we need assistance with gear is frustrating.

Moff: I think the problem with it is a lot of times it will be very showy. It will be like theatre: "*Look at me! I'm a person that's helping you because you can't possibly be doing this alone*."

Leona: I know that feeling.

MRR: Who writes the lyrics and what are they about?

Moff: We all write the lyrics.

Leona: Our songs come from things we've been talking about or thinking about or things that are really bothering us. For me, it's things that I think are really important to say.

Ursula: I think, like we kind of touched on before anything that we feel strongly about, there's nothing really too small or too big really to be addressed in a song.

Moff: Sometimes we decide on a subject that we all feel passionately about beforehand, sometimes the first person who feels compelled to sing on something we're playing just lets whatever out they need to. There's no set formula, but we all write our own lyrics, and collaboratively write parts that we sing together on generally.

MRR: Y'all released a tape when you were a two-piece and then you have an LP out that was recorded as a three-piece. What were the main differences in both recording those and releasing them?

Ursula: We were more tight as musicians for the LP. The tape was fairly early on.

Moff: Super early.

Ursula: And it was just Marty asked us if we wanted to do it. I don't think we approached him.

Moff: I remember talking to Marty and Meesha at Club 21. And being like "we only have iPhone recordings!" And they were like "We wanna do a tape label and record you!"

Ursula: We were the first band on Cosmonaut Tapes.

Moff: They've released so great many Portland demos in the last few years.

Ursula: Recording with them was easy, they were super nice. It was in our basement and then finished

up in their practice space. Pretty raw. Pretty...
Moff: Fast.
Ursula: Recording at Red Lantern was a lot more professional in some ways, but it was with also someone that we knew, so there was some comfort there.
Moff: We did it in not too much more time than we did the demo.
Ursula: Yes. We did it also really quickly. We didn't know at the time it was going to become a record, we just wanted recordings that reflected the introduction of bass into our sound (which was obviously a big change and big addition sonically) and had some new songs too that were *very* new and we were like "why don't we try recording those too?" Like "Join The Comfortable" and "Babes In Boyland," which is actually what the record got named after, and "Troll" was also pretty new and Kleine. "Baby Stimmen" on the record.
Moff: Why didn't we just call it "Kleine Baby"?
Leona: 'Cause that means "little baby"
Moff: Main difference, we paid for one with pizza and beer, and the other one we paid for with money. *[laughter]*
Moff: And we knew who was gonna release the tape before we recorded it, and we did not know who was going to be releasing the record when we recorded the LP.
Ursula: Should we tell that story? I love that story.
Moff: Wanna tell it, Leona, since it was your magic?
Leona: We were in the recording studio, and in between takes we were dancing to this band we could hear through the wall. I had that feeling in my stomach where I have to tell them that they're great and I can't fight it, so the next time I go out if their door is open I'm gonna talk to them. Their door was open so I blurted out "You're great!" And the bassist sitting in the back and looks at me and is like "Oh, you're in Mr. Wrong! Are you recording? When you get your recordings done send them over to me. I have a record label." And then lo and behold that's exactly what we did. Wasn't it like that?
Ursula: It was. There was all this kismet happening, I feel like.

Leona: Alex who put out our record is great, and also put out Lithics.
Moff: Y Pants. Neon.
Ursula: Reissued Kleenex /Liliput.
Leona: They put out Abronia's record.
Leona: It felt really cool to be included with this group of people. We could barely believe it when we saw the other records they had put out
Ursula: It seemed like a perfect fit for us.
Leona: Alex has helped us so much and put up with us throughout the process.
Ursula: Definitely someone who's in it for the right reasons, for the love of music.
Leona: I feel like everyone we've worked with pretty much has that.
Moff: Which is really exciting, going back to the first question about the great thing in Portland right now.

MRR: What are your future plans?
Ursula: We wanna be a cruise band.
Moff: In the lounge with a candlestick.
Leona: And elevator music.
Ursula: Well, we are planning on recording again. We'd love to put out some more vinyl if that's possible. Is that something we wanna say?
Leona and Moff: Yeah!
Ursula: Go on tour. Maybe get out of the country too. Maybe check out Canada, Mexico, Europe, maybe all of those. Right now, we've taken a break from playing shows and touring. We've just slowed down a lot to work on writing a bunch of new songs. So we're excited for what's to come.
Leona: I'm excited for the new stuff that we're writing. It feels like we're growthing. *[sic] [laughter]*
Leona: It's this exciting point when you're stepping off the edge into the abyss where you don't know where you're going. We don't know what the next "right" move is, so we're just jumping together, holding hands. Probably screaming. Together into the abyss future of new stuff. I wanna get braver as a human and take myself less seriously and figure out how to be more authentic through music and as a human, and this band has helped me so much already in that.
Moff: Smaller plans for the future are making our new practice space feel like music home. It's a future plan, I mean, you didn't specify, and I'd like a new t-shirt design.
Leona: And then you know, me personally, I'd love to take down capitalism.
Ursula: Yeah, that'd be cool.
Leona: Change the underlying structure of this country. Maybe have a cultural shift where we re-evaluate what's really important to us as a species and see what we want to do with this planet that we're destroying. That's my big future plan.
Ursula: Deliver a big F.U. to the status quo.
Moff: I wanna do a better job too, when we do go on tours in the future, documenting. Because it's always amazing to me every time that we play a show out of town, how supportive people are and that folks we hardly know are all coming together to make this event happen. There are good things and good people in the world, and I'd like to remember and credit those people and experiences they create.
Ursula: I wanna document more of what we do and the shows we play and stuff. I feel really lucky to be able to do what we're doing. It's just a really affirming and mostly really joyful experience, and I wanna remember it and look back on it. And constantly trying to live in the moment appreciate all the shit that's happening is a constant goal for me.

MRR: Anything else you wanna say?
Ursula: I'm really excited that we got to do an interview for *Maximum Rocknroll*.
Moff: Thank you Colin for taking the time to interview us!
Leona: I...am...thankful. *[laughter] [robot voice]* I...HAVE... THOUGHTS. They come out slowly at the start. I don't know where I'm going with this thought is why I'm having so much trouble with it. But it's a thankfulness, or a call for the places or the things or the music that people have been making for a long time but don't get recognition. There have been all kinds of people making all kinds of music for a long time. And it's cool to be living...where am I going?
Moff: You're getting there.
Leona: I wanna hear more music from different people. I just want there to be better music in the world. I want to hear it because I know it exists, I just don't know how to find it.
Moff: There's great music in the world.
Leona: There's *so* much great music in the world! But the avenues to find it are difficult.
Ursula: The internet? *[laughter]*
Leona: Yeah but there's so much on the internet I get overwhelmed!
Moff: So more mixtapes.
Leona: Yeah, I want more mixtapes! I need venues for finding good weird different music. I listen to the radio, but big radio has really sold out. So I'm just thankful that places like this exist, *Maximum Rocknroll* writeups, record stores, well-booked shows, our local X-Ray FM and Freeform Radio, and all the people out there, like both of you, who really care about music and have brought really good music into my life, people who continue to dig past the surface bullshit of music and find the substance and share it. I got to my point!

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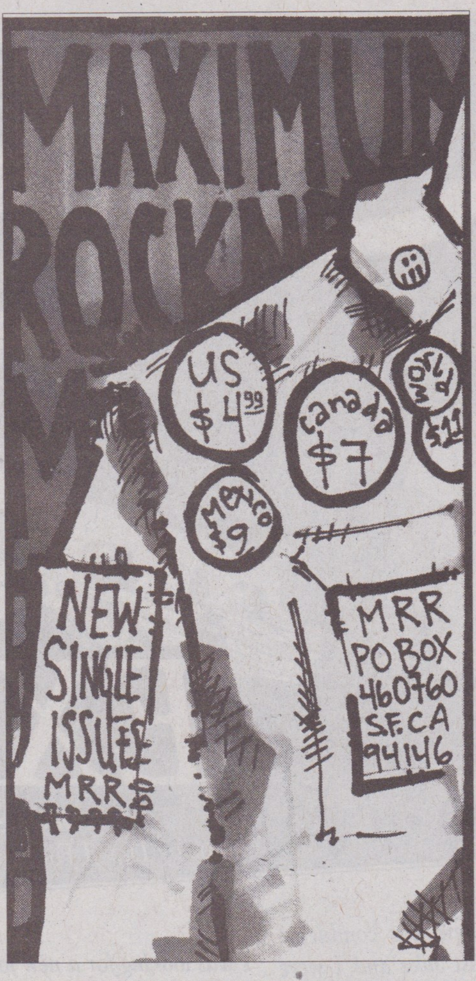

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EXEK

Interview by Jake Robertson.
Photos by David Forcier and Chevie Deveaux

Some background. The following interview was conducted on Thursday the 29th March 2018, whilst Jake and I were both on a lunch break at work. We work in a warehouse that stocks and distributes band merch, like shirts etc. We often have lunch at the same desks that we do our work at. Jake contributes to the Melbourne music scene in a number of ways—co-running two record labels and playing in a number of bands, most notably may arguably be Ausmuteants. It was actually at an Ausmuteants show that I landed my current job. It was two years ago. They were supporting Lumpy and the Dumpers at Melbourne's premier stink pit, The Tote.

I remember going to the show, to obviously see the bands, but also with a clear intention that I was going to tell people I was looking for a new job. I thought if I was lucky, word may get around, and eventually I may score some shit job down the line, which would act as a stopgap before I commence my PhD. Instead, Jake said come in on Monday. On that occasion it was quite easy to go out and get drunk and end up with job at the end of the night. A few weeks later I met my future fiancée. And so it seems the combination of true love and banking a steady stream of minimum wage cheques has postponed my research indefinitely. But that's cool. Maybe I'll commence it one day. Maybe I won't. It doesn't matter. I'm content.

MRR: EXEK don't really seem like a singles band. You've often told me that you don't have time for my favourite format, the 7". How come?

I don't really like flipping 7"s all the time. First of all. Actually, that's probably all.

MRR: Well, one time when we were leaving work together, you mentioned the reason why you preferred an album was that you looked at an album as a blank canvas, rather than just throwing songs here and there.

Actually, it was a non-blank canvas. It had paint on it, and was a completed artwork. Just like how an album is a completed work.

MRR: I guess that shows my listening skills.

Ha! I think we're on the same page, and so the question remains relevant and so I'll attempt to answer it. I think a record is at its most powerful, and most enjoyable, for me, if it is quite cohesive. So it's one entity. Therefore, like a finished artwork on a canvas, or a photograph in a frame. Every element, whether it's a line or dot, in the background or foreground, is related to every other line or dot in the foreground or background. The top left corner coalesces with the bottom right. I'm definitely not saying that every record should be a concept album, by the way. It's just that a bit of cohesion helps the listener immerse themselves in the universe that the artist has created. EXEK's universe is reflexive and introspective, and so we need more time than what is offered on a 7" in order to get our intentions across.

MRR: OK. Tell us a bit more about this universe. What was the main lyrical inspiration on *Ahead of Two Thoughts*? In terms of the canvas analogy, do the lyrics in different songs link up?

Yeah, they do a bit. If you boil it all down, each track presents a narrator who identifies a problem, but unfortunately is powerless to solve it. It may not be as obvious as "boredom" or "no future," but it remains entwined with the punk ethos. There's a few call backs to previous material too, for example the song "To Medicine (Biased Advice)" takes its name from our first LP, *Biased Advice*.

There's no singular inspiration for the lyrics on the record. Few different sources, stupid things, even viral YouTube clips.

MRR: Like "succulent Chinese meal"?
Yeah. Which is kinda what we're eating right now!

MRR: It is! What about the album title, where does that come from?
Ahead of Two Thoughts is a tip of the hat to Peter Greenaway's film *A Zed and Two Noughts*. You seen it?

MRR: Nah. Any good?
So good. Have you seen Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers*?

MRR: Yeah.
Thought so. *A Zed and Two Noughts* is almost a dead ringer for *Dead Ringers*. Michael Nyman does the score for *A Zed and Two Noughts*, and we do a cover of "Prawn Watching," one of his songs from the film, on the record. So we thought let's maybe play with referencing the film a little more.

MRR: You've played me some Nyman before, here at work. Kinda classical, right?
Yeah. Guess he's most famous for his score for *The Piano*. I don't think that is his best stuff, though. It's too heavy on the, you guessed it, piano. He scored a lot of Peter Greenaway's films, shorts and features, and they are way more interesting.

MRR: Do you think discussing contemporary classical film scores is warranted within the pages of punk's premier magazine?
Fuck. Narrow-mindedness will only get you so far. Doesn't matter how high you get your Mohawk to stick. Isn't branching out punk, and exploring new terrain?! One could argue that playing three-chord, three-minute, plebeian punk is perhaps the most un-punk thing you could do. I'll save that argument for another time.

MRR: The last couple of times I've seen you, Henry, the bass guitarist, has been sitting down. Has he found Jah, or is he just lazy?
One thing he hasn't found is a strap. Doesn't have a strap. Doesn't have a bass, actually. He's using my shitty one.

MRR: When you guys supported the Rebel, I offered him mine but he said no.
Offered him your strap? I think he's pretty happy sitting down. At the last show, we were pelted with empty pint glasses from a few overly excited people in the audience. And him sitting down, on a bar stool, in the middle of the stage, was a great barrier for myself. So I hid behind him, and he couldn't really move.

MRR: So, found Jah then. *[laughter]*
Jah as in Jah Wobble, sitting down to play bass in PiL? Then yes. Jah as in the Rastafarian Ideology of placing a low value on materialistic possessions, like bass straps? Then also, yes.

MRR: You guys don't go to studios, hey? You do it all, as in recording, yourselves? What's the process there?
Why bother going to studios? It would be so detrimental to us to go to a studio. We aren't tight. We're only tight once we've finished recording. And it is only then that a song is complete. I record everything myself. In my bedroom, or living room, or bathroom. That gives me freedom to continually keep adding and mixing. The majority of songs are nowhere near finished at the time of recording. It may sound wanky, but I use Eno as a reference here—treating the studio as an instrument. We never multitrack instruments, and the only time we have more than one input armed is when we track drums. And even then it's not many, as we only had two mics on the kit whilst recording *Ahead of Two Thoughts*. It's just a cascading series of overdubs that lasts weeks and months. Then there's some heavy editing. Everything gets chopped up. And it's around at this stage that we reach something worthy.

MRR: You've changed lineups a lot, but there's three members that have been pretty solid. With future records, will they have more of a say in songwriting?
Um, I think Sam [drums] has written a nice short song that should pop up soon. It's like a limerick.

MRR: Melodically?
Yeah. He was waiting for his girlfriend to come home, and he was hungry, and kept on hitting the table, like a hungry impatient child. Sang some silly lyrics over the top of this primitive beat. Sent it to me and I liked it. So that's gonna work its way onto one of the upcoming records. Not on the third record, though. As that is finished, and there's less input from the others on that.

MRR: Did Henry have much input on "Weight Loss (Henry's Dream)"? Is that even about him?
Yeah, kinda. It was taking the piss out of losing weight, and all the different ways one can lose weight. And not kilograms / pounds, specifically. It's also gaining weight, in terms of vanity, such as breast enlargements. It just seemed funny for us to mock the seriousness of the desire to lose weight but adding a cheap Nick Cave reference in parenthesis.

MRR: Do they have a song called "Nick's Dream" or "Rowland's Dream" or something?
Nah. Nick Cave has an album called *Henry's Dream* from some time in the '90s.

MRR: Oh! *[laughter]* That was lost on me.
I think that's gone over a few people's heads. Funny that, as even though we get the odd Birthday Party comparison, no reviewer has mentioned the Bad Seeds reference. Which is supposed to take the piss out of it. *Henry's Dream* is a shit record. And our boy Henry was in the midst of slowly transitioning out of a Rowland S. Howard worship stage in his life. So in an effort to discredit the whole Nick Cave / Bad Seeds / Rowland S. Howard ideology, I wacked his name in the song title. Also at the time he packed on a few due to drinking like a fish and smoking like a chimney.

MRR: Speaking of packing on a few, you've got a sandwich press, a kettle, deep inside pockets, and only $5. What's for lunch?
Ooooh. Good question. We planning tomorrow's lunch right now? OK. [long silence] Nachos! With a side...soup?

MRR: Walk us through it. What are the ingredients?
A can of Stagg Chili. Some fresh veggies, like tomato and cucumber. Melt some cheese onto it.

MRR: How are you going to melt the cheese onto it here?
Sandwich press.

MRR: Mmmm. What kind of soup we talking here?
Some kind of packet variety. Perhaps Mexican themed. I don't know if they have soup dishes there. I think I'm going there after the EXEK US tour. Will do my research and bring back intel to work.

MRR: Sorted. Back to the record. *Ahead of Two Thoughts* seems more thought out than the first record, *Biased Advice*, in terms of both production and songwriting. Did you spend a lot more time on this record?
A lot more. I think we started writing *Ahead of Two Thoughts* around the same time as *Biased Advice*.

MRR: 'Cause *Biased Advice* was just the tapes before, right?
Yeah. That record came out way after the original demo tape, the self-titled one. Which was re-recorded for the *Biased Advice* LP. And that was about the time we were writing *Ahead of Two Thoughts*. Some of the tracks, definitely some of the bass lines, I had writing before even moving down to Melbourne. Some may be close to a decade old.

MRR: Was that before or during your old Sydney band, Nevada Strange?
Ummm...During.

MRR: At the time, when writing them, did you think they may end up being Nevada Strange songs?
Nah. At that stage I didn't know what was happening with that band.

MRR: Was Mitch in Low Life at that time?
Yeah. I'm glad I didn't contribute those bass lines or songs then, as they wouldn't have gone on to amount to anything.

MRR: Were those songs the more upbeat aggressive ones that ended up on *Ahead of Two Thoughts*, like "U Mop"?
I think so. But I honestly can't remember off the top of my head.

MRR: Is the dynamic of EXEK different now that Superior Viaduct have stepped in?
Nah, not at all. On a whole, they've been really easy to get along with. I think they are pretty eager to hear what we have next.

MRR: Helping out with the tour too?
Yeah, they're eager to see us play.

MRR: All six of you going?
Not sure yet. Hopefully not.

MRR: As a band of six cis white males, how do you find the socio-political climate in the Melbourne underground music scene?
It's great. For us, that is. Being a gang of six cis white dudes can really open a lot of doors. We smash through glass ceilings into top story penthouse apartments that are brimming with financial and critical accolades. We never get ditched from a bill either. Great momentum. Nah, but seriously. Shouldn't matter who is making the music. Anyone can, and anyone should. Peace.

MRR: If everyone and anyone can, in your opinion what are the shitest acts currently around?
Ooooh, juicy! Any band consisting of six cis white males. Except us. I don't know, to be honest. Sometimes a band I love will utterly disappoint me. Concurrently, acts I don't like may completely woo me away on a certain night. I don't often go to shows where I don't know the bands. All the people I hang out with are in bands, and so it's hard enough already to keep up with seeing all that, let alone taking a punt on some random bill on a random night. There's too many bands in Melbourne! A few thousand? Probably. Most don't interest me. And most techno side projects don't interest me. Particularly, if it's someone who plays, or used to play, in punk bands, but can't be fucked dealing with loading amps and kits. I get it. The appeal of having a laptop and a few pedals is not lost on me. I'm just surprised there isn't more variety. More punters have a crack at a wobble board. Or a didgeridoo! That would be great. Aside from the whole cultural appropriation callout.

Ps: EXEK are touring the US Sept / Oct 2018. Check facebook.com/soundexek for details.

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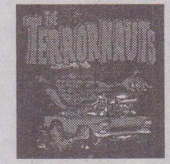

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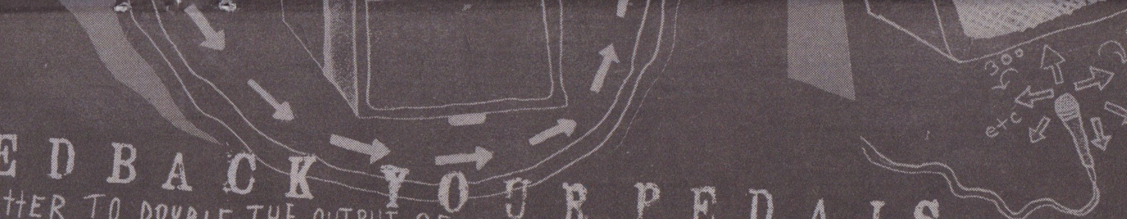

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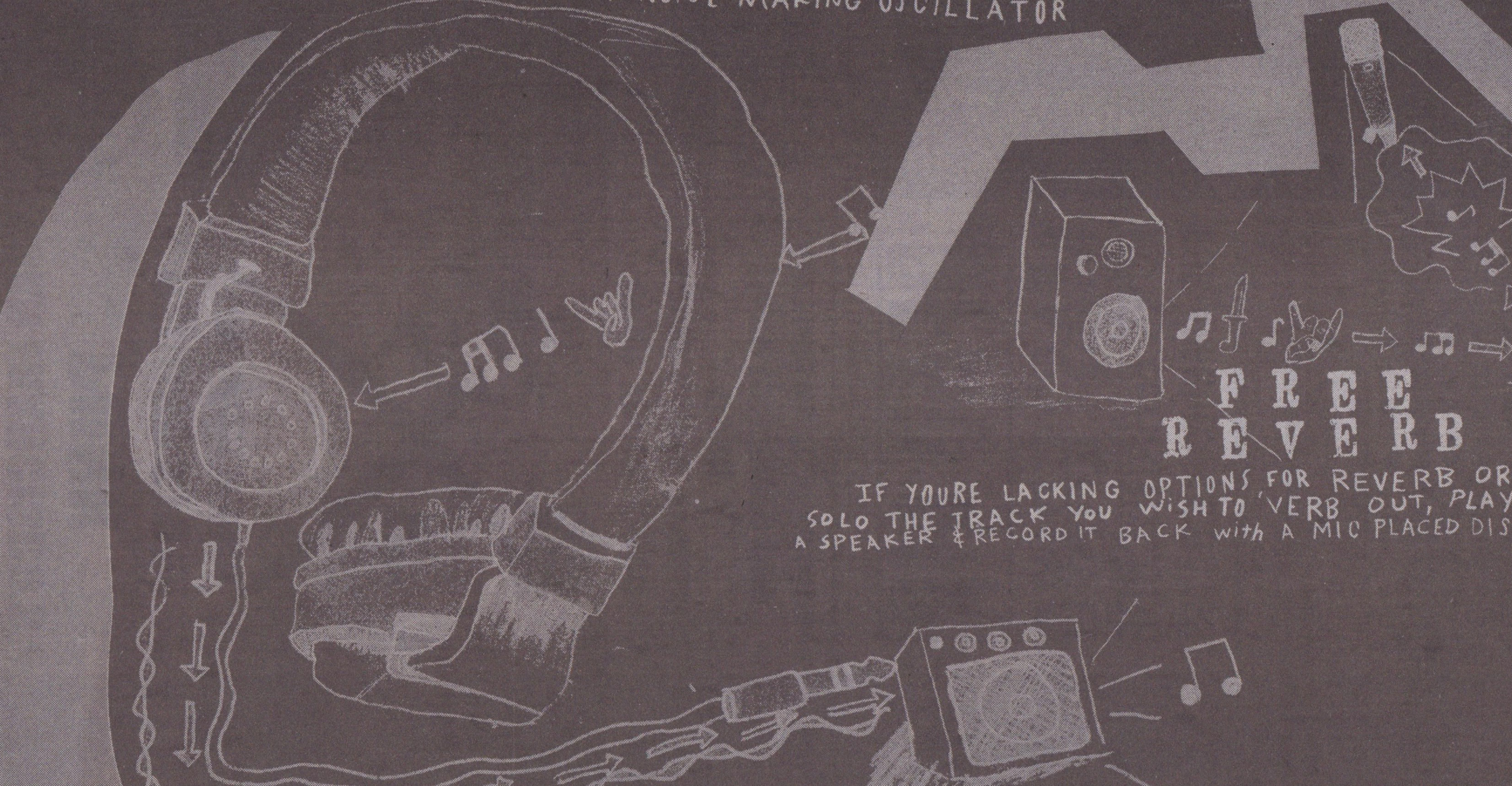

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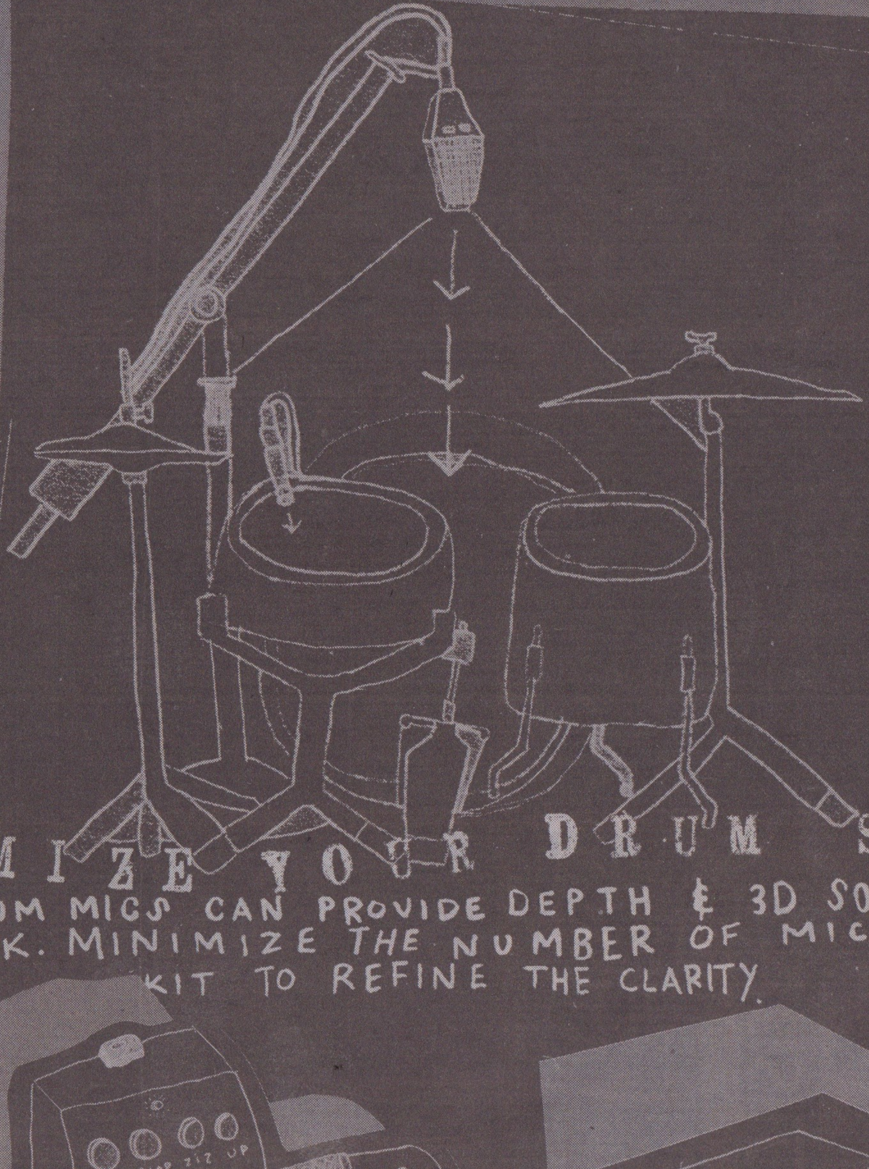

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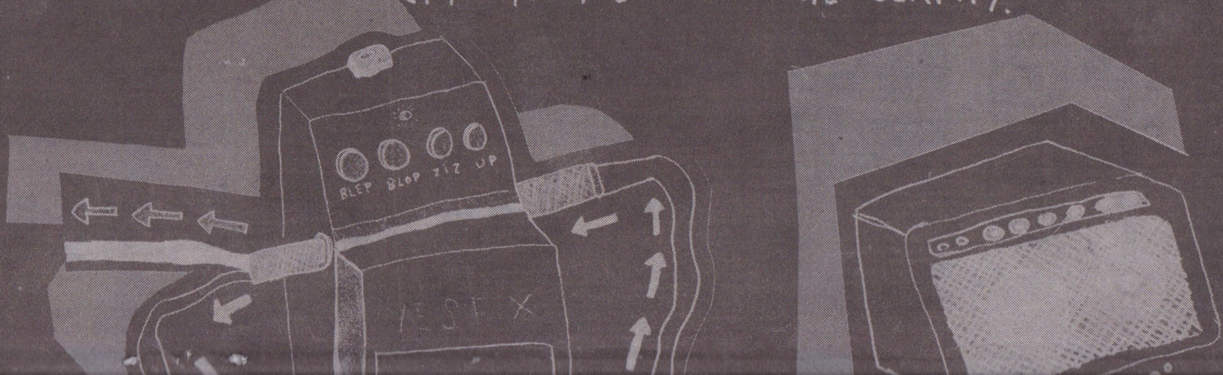

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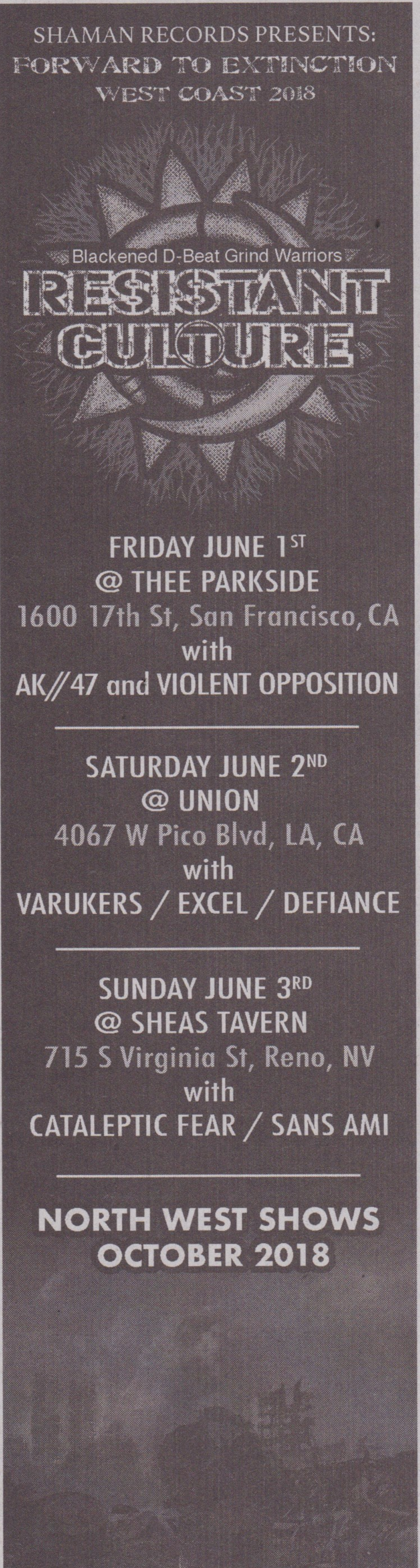

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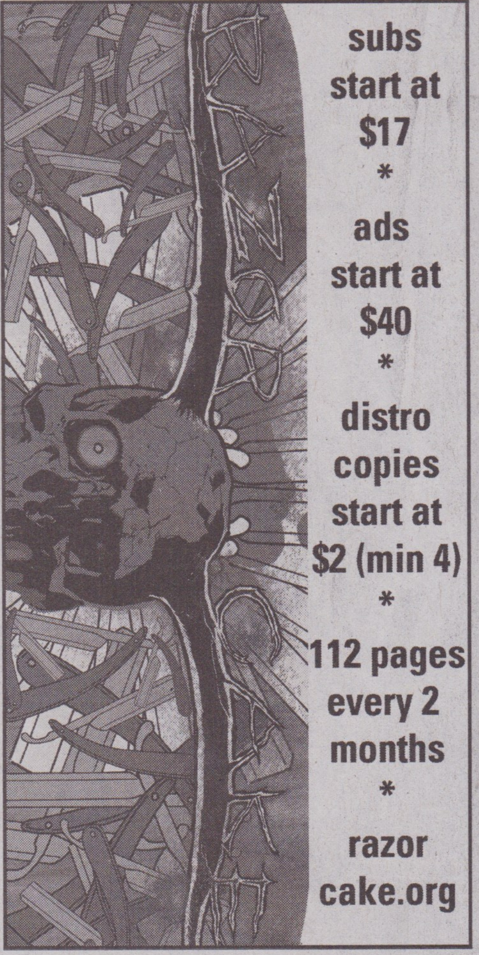

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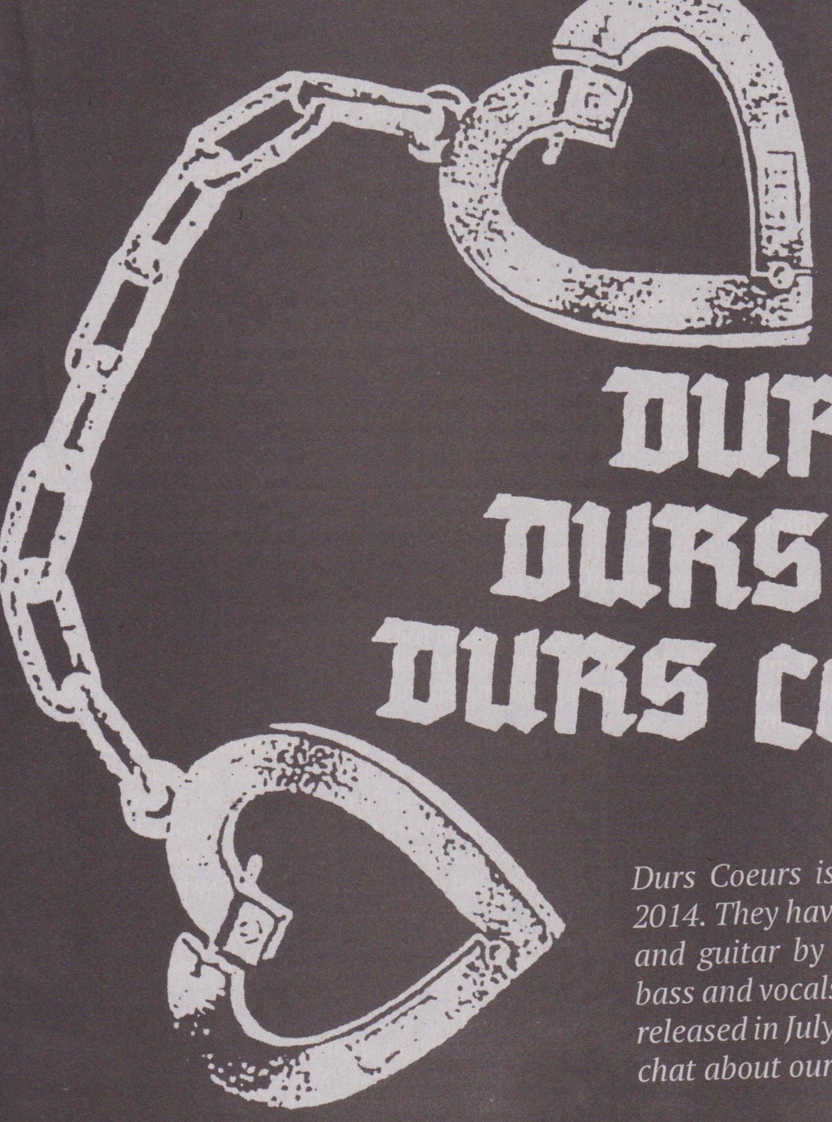

DURS COEURS
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DURS COEURS

Durs Coeurs is a Francophone Ottawa band formed in 2014. They have a classic punk sound that features vocals and guitar by Patrick Pageau, drums by Dan Lee, and bass and vocals by Rich T. Their first LP, Dur Dur Dur, was released in July of 2017. I sat down with Patrick and Dan to chat about our city, punk origins, and DIY communities.

Interview by Sofia Shutenko. Images provided by the band.

MRR: So Patrick, how did you first get into punk?
Patrick Pageau: Well, my brother was a skateboarder, and he had a bunch of skate videos and I'd watch them 'cause I thought it was cool. But also there was always good music on them, so I got to know about kinda underground punk and metal bands through those.

MRR: And then how did you find a punk community to explore?
Patrick: I didn't for years. I'm from a small town about an hour outside of Ottawa, and I didn't know anybody who was into that kinda stuff, so I did my own research, turning some rocks over...I didn't have internet back then, or maybe there was but it wasn't like it is now. I didn't have it in my house and I didn't use it. So I would buy albums and look through the thanks list for band names and discover bands that way and take chances on records. Listen to it and see if I liked it kinda thing. And then once I was about twenty, I left L'Orignal, came to Ottawa and started going to shows.

MRR: Dan, how did you get into punk?
Dan: My sister's friend made her a cassette comp, and it was all US punk from '77 to '83, and she was playing it in her room, and I stole it from her the next day.

MRR: How old were you?
Dan: Ten, eleven. And it was all I really cared about after that.

MRR: So were both of you just instantly drawn to it?
Patrick: Yeah. When I was younger, my mom, she had tapes like David Lee Roth and Quiet Riot and stuff like that...

MRR: Sounds like a cool mom.
Patrick: Yeah, well she listens to a lot of other crappy stuff, but she had that kind of stuff and I kinda got into that when I was between like five and ten. You know, listening to my parents' tapes. Always liked the guitar, and my dad would listen to Dire Straits and he'd always talk about how the guitar player was great. That kinda cemented in my head that guitar was cool.

MRR: Still cool.
Patrick: Yeah. *[laughter]* And so I kinda gravitated towards guitar driven music.

MRR: Guitar was the first instrument you learned to play?
Patrick: Yeah, I wanted to play drums but...I asked for drums when I was a kid and they got me a guitar.

MRR: Drums are a little harder. The logistics of having a drum kit and moving it...
Patrick: And they're a lot louder.

MRR: That was probably part of your parents' decision.
Patrick: Definitely.

MRR: But you play drums now for the band Omerta.
Patrick: I do, yeah.

MRR: Dan, you play drums most of the time, correct?
Dan: Yeah.

MRR: Do you play other instruments?
Dan: No.

MRR: 'Cause you're just so good at the drums, why dip into anything else?
Dan: No, I'm so bad at the drums, I feel like I could only limit myself to one instrument at a time. I also play drums for Occult Burial.

MRR: The next question is for both of you, but I guess your answers may be different because your localities were different: were you influenced by local bands growing up in punk? What were your favorites?
Patrick: Yeah, I would say influenced in the sense of how to function as a band, sonically not so much. Now it's different, I think that now in Ottawa there are a lot of really good bands. There always have been, but not necessarily my cup of tea, you know? Richard who plays bass in Durs Coeurs used to play in this band called Take One for the Team, a powerviolence band. I'm not really into that kind of stuff, but they were really good and I really liked them a lot, and they're great guys. Critical Convictions too, they were really good. I also really liked Sedatives.
Dan: I came to this city later. I'm from Winnipeg. I started going to shows when I was a kid, and it didn't inspire me to start a band, but it inspired me I guess to be more confident in myself. And it was nice to feel like a part of something, when I felt like I had really nothing, because I came from a pretty isolated childhood, so it was nice to be kind of welcomed by strangers. It really helped me out a lot.

MRR: What was the punk scene like in Winnipeg?
Dan: Well, at that time, it was waning. There was a lot of the crossover thing happening, but there was still a little bit of a last gasp of kind of pure...more hardcore before it became really metal. There were bands like DAC, Dangerously Americanized Canadians.

MRR: That's an amazing name.
Dan: They were kind of huge at that time. There was this other band called Hypocrisy, and the Hypocrisy guys were really cool, like that they would even talk to me, because I was, like, a *kid* and these guys were cool teenagers. They let me hang out one time when they rehearsed back in the suburbs, and stuff like that. I guess it influenced me just to let me know that I wouldn't wanna be a part of anything else. Just going to shows, listening to music, and just not worrying about what people at my school thought of me or anything like that.
Patrick: When I started going to shows in Ottawa, DIY punk shows at DisHouse and stuff, that was an eye-opener for me, having shows in your home. That was my first sort of encounter with that kind of thing, and I fell in love with that idea. Getting it done with your own means, you know, what you have.

MRR: When Durs Coeurs started, what did you want it to sound like? Has that changed over time?
Patrick: I guess we wanted to sound like '77 to mid '80s sort of punk / rock'n'roll. Like the Kids and Ramones and the Damned and stuff like that. Just having that kind of rock'n'roll type of riff, I guess you could say, and I kinda incorporate that in the other stuff that I've done, but maybe not so blatantly.There's melody, singing rather than yelling, it actually feels really good to do that.

MRR: Literally.
Patrick: Yeah, both literally and otherwise. Harmonies, that's always something that I loved in music and wanted to do.

MRR: Tell me about the most fun show you've ever played with Durs Coeurs.
Dan: It must have been a Funeral Home show, where it seemed like everything was just the right level of energy and intensity, and you know how there's just that one swinging light [in the basement], so it gives it this real great sense of immediacy, and we were playing tight, and it was a nice summer's day so everyone was just sweating, and it's just pure energy, right? You're riding off what you're getting from the audience, and its just...You cease to exist. It's the moment. I think that's what I'm always in it for, but it happens so seldom, especially for a sustained period of time.

MRR: Can you tell us a little bit more about Funeral Home?
Patrick: Yeah, good friends of ours live there and have shows in their basement, and it's actually the best place to have a show in Ottawa, I think. House shows in general, you know. They're just great folks, and it's a really nice place to be, hang out...If they weren't doing that kind of stuff, I think Ottawa would suffer a lot.

MRR: Yeah. Important space.
Patrick: Also the TFO thing was fun, the video shoot that we did.

MRR: What was that?
Patrick: TFO is Télévision Française de l'Ontario. It's a Francophone TV station, a sister station with TVO. They sent us a message randomly, they were like, "hey, we're gonna be in Ottawa taking footage of bands playing live in a studio setting, and we'd like you guys to do a few songs." So we did, and it was cool. They did a really good job, the end result was really good. The video is on YouTube. It was a trip.

MRR: Did you know any of the other bands doing it?
Patrick: That day it was just us, but i think Bonnie Doon did a thing for them too. It wasn't just Francophone bands. I think that maybe they picked us as the token Francophone band or something.

MRR: Even though it was the Franco-Ontarien station?
Patrick: Yeah, well they had to, right? No, but it was cool. It's not the best show we've ever played, but it was an interesting experience.

MRR: Sounds like it. So on the topic of the band being Francophone, your lyrics for Durs Coeurs are all in French, and that seems intentional. Can you tell me about being Franco-Canadien and what that means to you?
Patrick: It is intentional, for sure. Being Franco-Canadien, it's just my culture, I guess you could say. I'm not a nationalist or anything like that. It's my first language, that's how I was raised, the terms in which I learned to think. As far as writing in French, for me, it's easier, because—

MRR: You think in French?
Patrick: Well both, now, because I speak English a lot of the time. At work every day, with my partner. I mean, she speaks French too, we kind of go between, but most of my friends are

Anglophone, and I speak English probably more than I do French. So this is a way for me to kind of participate in the culture, have my piece. For writing, with language, there's always cultural referents with expressions and stuff. I implement those kinds of things in the lyrics.

MRR: Ottawa is an interesting place for that because it's kind of a central meeting of Franco and Anglo cultures, being on the border between Ontario and Québec and also the nation's capital. So you were just talking about the writing process. What are your lyrics about?
Patrick: Well, a lot of them are pretty personal, and I try to keep them vague enough that you can't tell specifically what I'm talking about, but you get a sense of where I'm coming from. Usually it's stuff that I'm working through in my own head. Some of those lyrics might come across as sort of "tough" or something, like I wanna be a hard-boiled, hard-edged kinda guy, but it's actually more of a reminder to myself. I wrote them that way. Kind of self-help, I guess you could say. And then some of them are more on the political side of things.

MRR: On the latest album, *Dur Dur Dur*, pick one song from that album and tell me about the lyrics.
Patrick: We have a song called "L'eau Et Le Feu," which means fire and water. In French, you say that about conflict, people don't get along, it's like fire and water. It's definitely more of a personal song that touches on a lot of different aspects of my life. It's generally about how being in a conflict with someone can be really messy, and how words sometimes are misconstrued or just thrown around carelessly, and how complicated it can be, but also how sometimes maybe it's better to not bother, because it can get so messy. And just like...you don't have to engage with people if it's gonna be like that, you know?

MRR: Yeah. How is the experience of being in a Francophone band different from Anglo bands you play in, like Omerta for example? Or is there any difference?
Patrick: Not really...from my perspective. From an outside perspective, we might be viewed differently, but with punk and stuff, I think people are pretty open-minded. There's a lot of classic bands that sing in Swedish, Finnish, Spanish, and whatever, and I kinda drew influence from that and I figured it would be fine. I mean, it would be fine anyways, it's just where I'm from, you know? Never really gotten any, say, backlash or anything from that.

MRR: Let's talk about Ottawa. Our city is sometimes referred to as "the city that fun forgot." What do you think about that?
Patrick: Well, if you're from, maybe, Montréal I could see why you would think that, but I like Ottawa, I think Ottawa is great. There's a lot of good bands, good scene, good folks. Definitely a lot better than the town where I'm from. I've been on tour through the States and stuff with one of my other bands, and that actually really made me appreciate Ottawa a lot more.
Dan: Fun is where you find it. I mean, I can't compare Ottawa to other epicenters because I've never lived in other places apart from Winnipeg, but I think in terms of its DIY community it's

pretty strong. I think Ottawa could do a bit better in trying to be more encompassing and seeing beyond one's own narrow view of what it means to be, you know, whatever genre you want, and maybe being more open to having a cross-section of styles happening in one space. Which I see happening more, and I think that's encouraging. But I think it's a really healthy scene. I wish there were more all-ages shows...Maybe there are and I'm just not aware of it, and that's good too. I like being old and not really knowing what's going on in that respect, I think that's a good thing. I think Ottawa is a totally fun and vital scene. But like I said, fun is where you find it, if you don't like how things are going for you, change it.
Patrick: Make it happen.
Dan: Yeah. It's usually pretty easy, and you can find allies in the strangest of places.
Patrick: We're quite lucky, actually, in Ottawa. People are really supportive, there's a good number of venues to have punk shows, DIY shows, whatever.

MRR: Dan, you mentioned cross-sections of genres and the scene being more encompassing. Do you think the Ottawa punk scene is more integrated than, say, Montréal, across language and sub-genre differences?
Patrick: I think that does happen in Ottawa just because Ottawa is smaller. You don't get to be as picky as if you had five D-beat bands in your town and five post-punk bands. You know, there's more crossover. I think it's necessary in a place like this, and I think that's a really good thing.

MRR: But it could be happening more?
Dan: I would like to see more all ages metal shows with punk shows on it, or even a folk show with an electric band, that sort of thing. Experimental, performance art with a punk band. Stuff like that. If you're outside of whatever the mainstream is, you should just try and bring it in and see what common ground you have, and how could share your resources to get it out there and help each other out.

MRR: How has the Ottawa punk community changed in the time you've been participating?
Patrick: More bands that I like have been popping up. Different spaces have been popping up.

MRR: How long have you been involved?
Patrick: I've been here for about fifteen years.
Dan: Well, I'm uncomfortable to say I'm part of the "punk scene," 'cause I play in what is known to be a punk band but, you know, I'm a father, and I pretty much stay at home, and I'm not a promoter or anything like that, so I'm not really that visible. Fut I would consider myself to have been involved for the past five years or so.

MRR: So have you noticed any changes?
Dan: I'm seeing younger faces, I'm seeing faces I haven't seen before and then seeing them go on. I see a kid one day I'm telling to buy a Discharge record, and six months later he's in a band, you know? So that's always cool to see. Just that constant evolution and them sticking to it and finding empowerment with whatever it is that inspires them to do what they want. That's cool. And righteous.
Patrick: One change that I've seen is more people taking it upon themselves to book shows. People have also been moving from Halifax and Montréal. More people are moving to Ottawa now than in previous years. I feel like that has really helped make the Ottawa scene richer and better.

MRR: There's room in Ottawa to make things happen if you want to.
Patrick: Exactly.
Dan: I agree with that for sure.

MRR: This one is really broad. Why is punk important to you?
Patrick: Well, I love bands that have identified as punk and I guess I do, but it's not like my be-all and end-all or anything like that. But within that broad definition, what I think is important or interesting—and you see it elsewhere, you know—is people making music with what they have, what they know, just kinda taking up instruments and starting a band and learning how to play as they go. Not letting anything hold you back, I think is amazing. I think that with punk you see that more than a lot of other things. There's no threshold you have to cross in order to be in a band, you can just start it even if you don't know how to play, you're already doing it. I think that's uncommon.
Dan: There will always be oppressive systems and hierarchies that we have to overcome and we have to break down, and I think punk is a critical kind of attack in that, whether or not you're conscious of it. I think we should always remember that the term "community" is grassroots. We should always be there to empower one another, and I think punk is integral to that, or you know, what your idea of punk is. What gives you power to control your destiny. If just playing music makes you happy, then you should do that and not worry about whether or not it's "good" *[laughter]*, you should just do it.

MRR: Any last words?
Patrick: We're gonna be recording eight new songs.

MRR: When is that gonna be out?
Patrick: Most likely this year. Hopefully. Once we're done with it, it's out of our hands. We're gonna be recording with Chany from Inepsy, he's building a really cool studio with all kinds of analog gear, compressors and reel-to-reel 16-tracks. Should be good. Well I mean, the studio should be good, I don't know if our stuff is gonna be good...but I like it.

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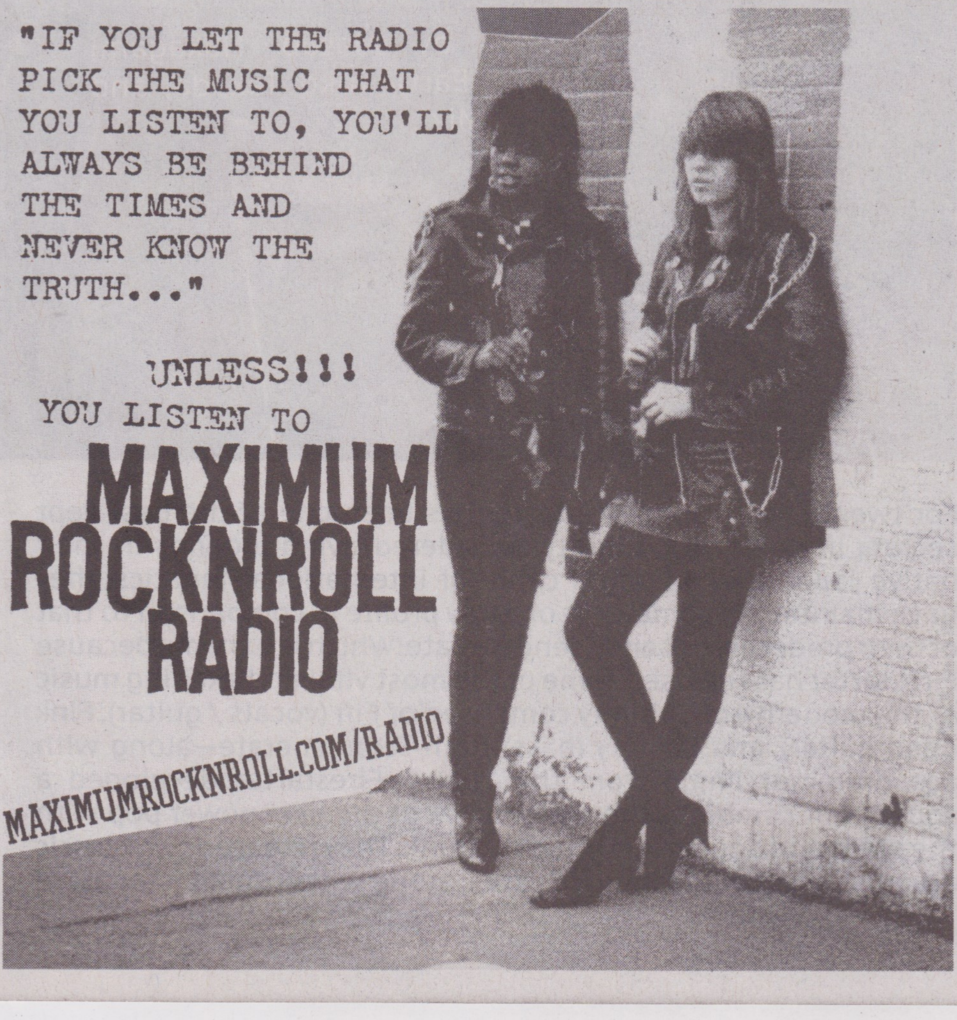

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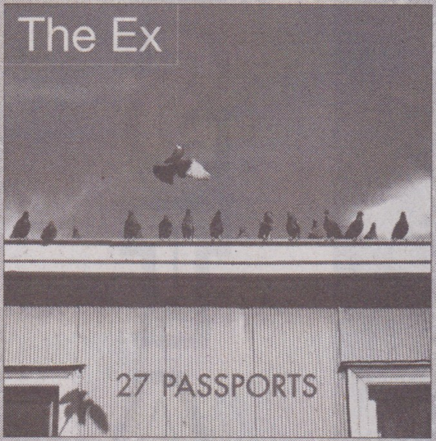
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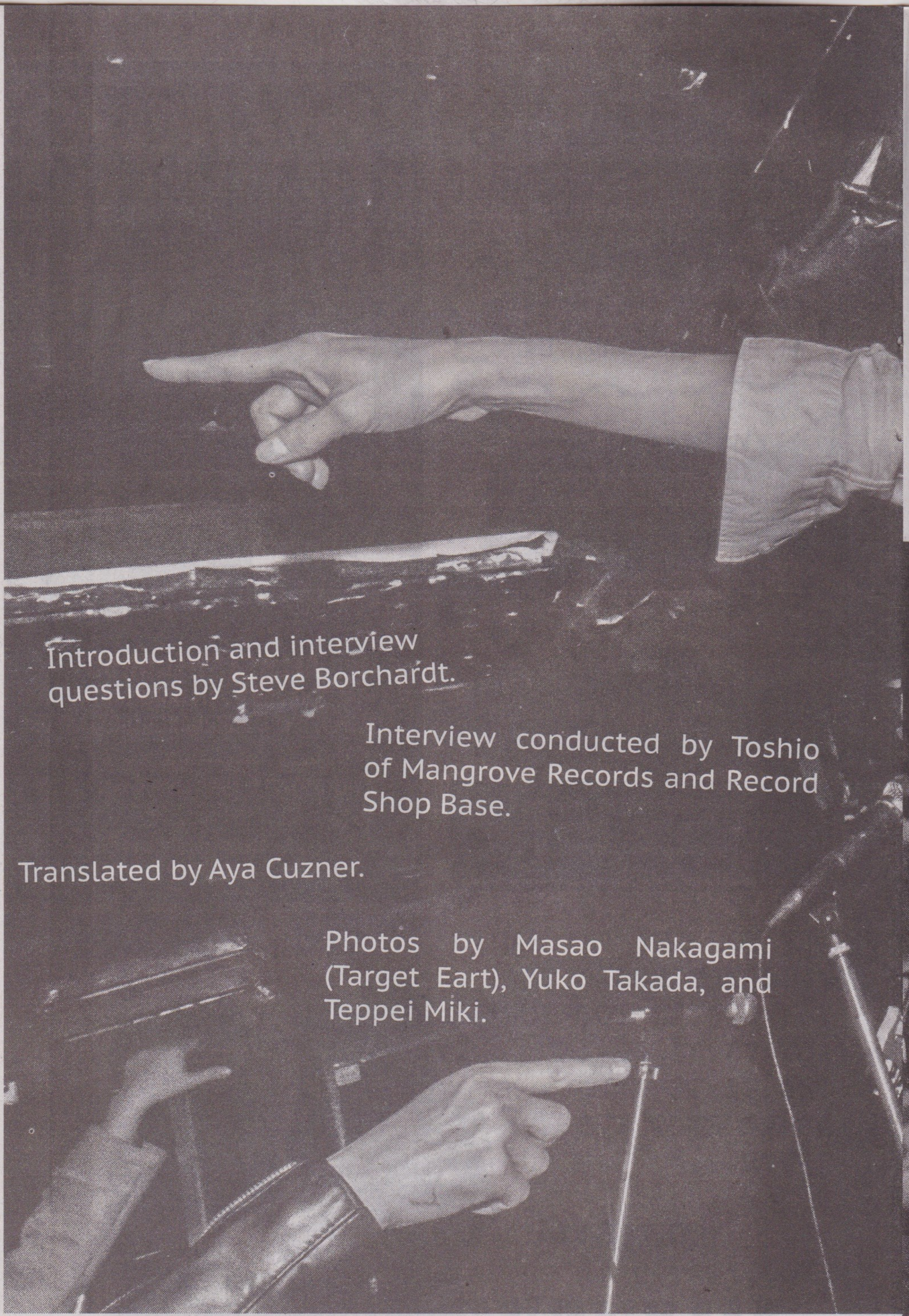


Introduction and interview questions by Steve Borchardt.

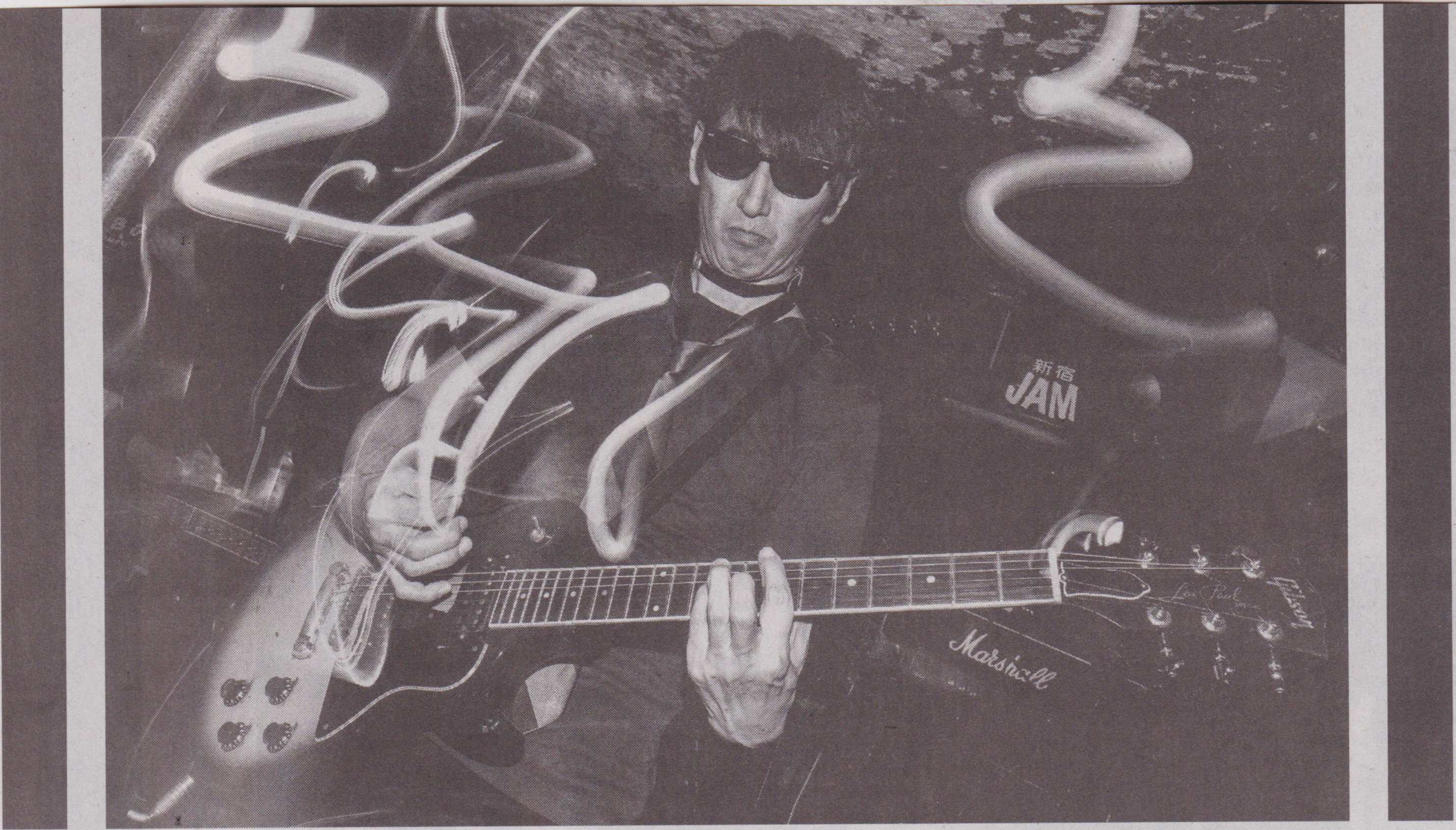
Interview conducted by Toshio of Mangrove Records and Record Shop Base.

Translated by Aya Cuzner.

Photos by Masao Nakagami (Target Eart), Yuko Takada, and Teppei Miki.

For twenty years now, Firestarter has been one of the best kept secrets in punk rock. Rightly considered living legends in their native Japan and among a cadre of international fanatics, they have maintained somewhat of a low profile in comparison to that of their predecessor band Teengenerate. Which is a shame because Firestarter has released some of the most vital and exciting music of the modern era. Initially composed of Fifi (vocals / guitar), Fink (lead guitar), and Sammy (bass) from Teengenerate—along with ace drummer Jimbo from the Titans—Firestarter developed a sound that combines the melodicism of the best power pop with the spirit and aggressive attack of punk. They released two classic albums on Japan's Mangrove Label, along with a small handful of

singles, before Fink abruptly left the band. Afterwards, they went through a string of replacement lead guitarists, thereby stalling their recording momentum. However, Firestarter has continued unabated as one of the hottest live bands on the planet. What's more, they are currently in peak condition with Fink back in the fold after a near-decade-long absence and fifth member Keisuke taking over rhythm guitar duties from Fifi. Now Firestarter are poised to make their biggest international splash yet, starting with their debut performance on American soil—a one off at this year's Burger Boogaloo in Oakland on July 1st—and continuing with the release of the first ever American vinyl pressings of their two Mangrove albums slatted to come out on Secret Mission Records this summer (Mangrove has also re-released both albums on CD with bonus tracks). We caught up with Firestarter to discuss their storied history as well as what they have in store for the future.



MRR: Thanks for letting me interview you guys at your bar *[Poor Cow in Tokyo]* today, Fifi. So, after Teengenerate broke up, Fink went on to form the Raydios with Sammy, while Fifi concentrated on his power pop band Tweezers with Tomoko from Supersnazz. Why did Teengenerate break up? Did you guys want to do something different with your next bands, and if so, how did you differentiate your subsequent bands from Teengenerate?

Fifi: I started Tweezers while I was still playing in Teengenerate, so I just kept on doing Tweezers after Teengenerate broke up. With Teengenerate, we were able to tour the U.S. and Europe for a couple of months each over the course of just three years, and we also got to release a lot of records. So I felt like we achieved everything we wanted to do. As far as the creative direction goes, I wasn't writing any songs for Teengenerate, so whatever I was writing for Tweezers and Firestarter naturally differentiated itself from Teengenerate.

Fink: Yeah, just what my brother said—we did plenty with Teengenerate. And we were also fed up with each other. *[laughter]* After the breakup, in the early stage of the Raydios, I was playing the songs I wrote for TG that my brother nixed. I guess for me, the beginning of the Raydios was a bit of an extension of Teengenerate. I was writing some new material too, but none of it made it onto the record.

Fifi: I think Raydios sounded very similar to the early stages of Teengenerate. You know, back when we were covering bands like Nervous Eaters. Teengenerate gradually simplified and began using three chords. It was kinda like the Raydios were getting back to the early days.

MRR: Fifi, you formed Firestarter as a three piece with Sammy and Jimbo while the Tweezers were still going on, right? What motivated you to form Firestarter while you were still doing the Tweezers? For Sammy and Jimbo, do you remember how you both joined the band, and what did you think of it when you started?

Fifi: Tweezers were a power pop band, so I wanted to play punk rock. That's all. Chloroform was going on around the same time too. *[Chloroform was a series of "punk only" live events featuring bands like Registrators, Knocks, and Young Ones. Mangrove later released a compilation documenting the scene.]*

MRR: Sammy and Jimbo, how did you end up playing in Firestarter?

Sammy: All because of Fifi. *[laughter]*

Jimbo: I had to sell myself on Fifi. Also, I remember that Firestarter started before Raydios.

Fifi: This is how it happened: My brother, Sammy, and Jimbo started a band right after TG broke up, and I eventually joined them. And then my brother quit to form the Raydios and the rest of us formed Firestarter. And then Raydios stopped playing indefinitely and my brother ended up coming back to us to play in Firestarter. I know, it's a little convoluted.

MRR: Sammy, you were asked to play by both brothers at the same time. How did you feel about that?

Sammy: I just went with the flow.

MRR: What was your first impression of Firestarter at first?

Jimbo: I was pretty high strung and it was a tense atmosphere...but in a good way.

Sammy: I think you were nervous because there were some tough songs to play. Intricate chords and complex structures. It wasn't easy.

Fifi: Yeah, I guess Firestarter songs were more complicated compared to Teengenerate. We kinda stopped playing those complex songs by the time we released our first record, though.

MRR: There is an interview with Fink in *Rock 'n' Roll Overdose* where he described the music you were initially doing with Firestarter as "eccentric U.S. punk rock" like the Dogs from Detroit. What caused you to switch to the more pop-oriented style Firestarter is known for, and did any of those early songs ever make it onto record?

Fifi: I started Firestarter because I wanted to play something completely different from the power pop I was playing with Tweezers. I was like, "to hell with catchiness and pop." I wanted to play menacing and aggressive punk rock like Razar (AUS) and the Dogs (Detroit). But then Tweezers broke up and I ended up wanting to do catchy tunes again, so we ended up incorporating more pop into Firestarter.

Fink: I guess initially there was no intention of playing pop music with Firestarter, but I think right around when I joined Firestarter after Raydios, I remember saying we should play catchy songs too. Why not, right? Tweezers had already broken up.

Fifi: Yeah, that sounds about right. I just can't write aggressive punk. When I do it just turns into a catchy song. I can't help it.

MRR: Did any of the earlier eccentric songs make it onto the LP?

Fifi: Nope. We had a ton of songs, though. Songs like "Slum Rock" and "Johnny Moped" were way later.

MRR: We have a question from Mitch Cardwell...he's wondering what specific Japanese bands influenced you guys. It seems like you've been less vocal about Japanese influences rather than US / UK / AUS ones...

Fifi: I wasn't influenced in the slightest by any Japanese bands. There are a lot of Japanese bands I like, though, like the Stalin.

Fink: I listen to Japanese bands, but I'm not at all influenced by them.

MRR: Fink, you left the band shortly after the release of *Livin' On the Heat*. What made you decide to leave the band? For the rest of you, how did you take the news when Fink told you he was leaving? You had attained a certain level of underground popularity in Japan by this point, so was it difficult to suddenly be faced with the choice of becoming a three piece again or finding a new guitar player?

Fifi: One night after practice we went to an izakaya [Japanese pub] and Fink and I got into a fight. He left and never came back. That's how he left the band.

MRR: Oh man, so how did the rest of you feel about Fink leaving the band?

Sammy: I didn't know what went down, so I was perplexed.

Jimbo: I basically thought, "*Doh!*"

MRR: Firestarter had a pretty strong underground following by that time. How did Fink's departure affect the band?

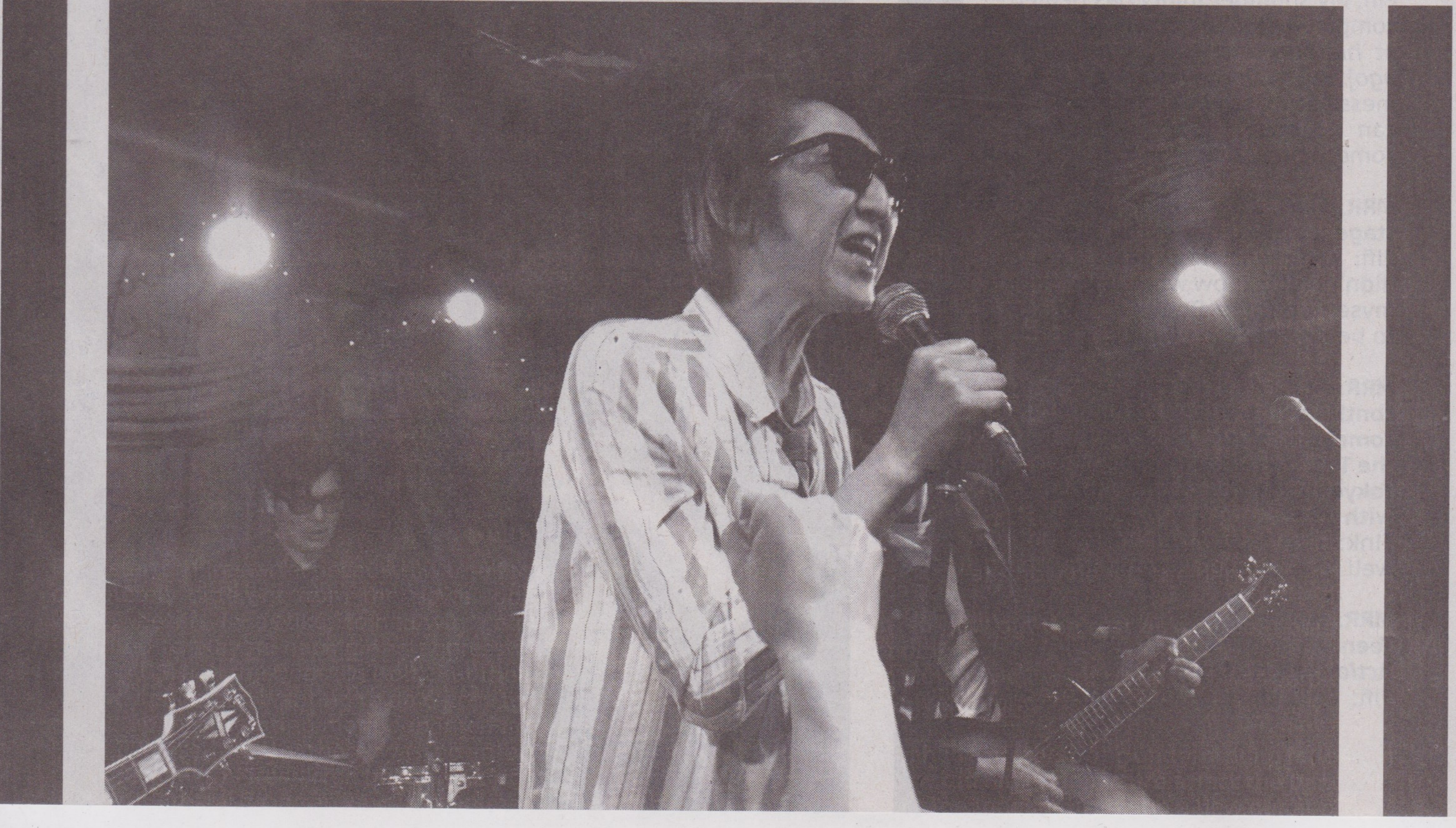
Fifi: It didn't take too long for us to find a new guitar player.

Fink: Me leaving was a devastating loss for the band for sure. *[laughter]*

MRR: It seemed difficult to find a replacement after Fink left and you guys went through a few guitar players. How was Keisuke discovered? And Keisuke, can you describe how it felt to join Firestarter? What was it like playing with them on stage for the first time?

Keisuke: I was a huge fan of Firestarter and eventually started going to Fifi's bar, Poor Cow. One night when I was hanging out at Poor Cow, he asked me to play guitar for Firestarter. I was stunned. Come to think of it, it was on Christmas Eve! To be honest, I was so freaking nervous that I don't really remember the first practice with the band. But there was a show coming up, so I practiced like hell by myself. I was aware a number of hardcore Firestarter fans would be harsh on the "new guy," so I had to keep reminding myself I was now the guitar player for Firestarter. Even if someone threw a bottle at me or something, I just had to play my heart out! I think I did OK. I was so nervous and amped up I don't remember much about the first show.

MRR: Fifi, a few years ago you had an accident where you broke your shoulder and ended up in the hospital. There was a Firestarter show booked for a few weeks later at Shelter *[a popular venue in Tokyo]* and Fink stepped in to replace you on guitar on short notice. Fifi, can you describe what it was like for you to have Fink return to the band to help out when you were in a bad situation? Fink, how



did you feel playing in Firestarter again after a number of years had gone by? Finally, for everyone, do you have any memories of that first show back with Fink?
Fifi: There was no awkwardness because so many years had already gone by since Fink left Firestarter. He jumped right in.
Fink: I was thinking of that Firestarter show as an extension of the Teengenerate reunion show *[in 2013]*, because the lineup was pretty much the same. So I thought it would be a cakewalk to play in FS again. As it turned out, I fucked up a lot during the set. *[laughter]*

MRR: I think it was an emotional moment for the long-time Firestarter fans with you two brothers reunited as Firestarter. Was it emotional for you guys too?
Sammy: Hell no. I thought, "Aw great, Fink is back." *[laughter]]*
Jimbo: No way, it was definitely emotional for me. And it felt really natural to play with him again.

MRR: Fifi, can you talk a little about your finger condition, and how it has made it difficult for you to play guitar? How difficult was this to adjust to at first? You've always been an incredible live performer, but it seems like since you stopped playing guitar live you have become a truly great frontman. Do you feel more comfortable now not playing guitar and being a frontman?
Fifi: My shoulder injury has healed completely *[he fell down the stairs at his bar Poor Cow a few years ago]*. But as for my fingers, they're messed up. There's not much I can do about it because there's something wrong with the nerves.

MRR: How do you feel being on stage without your guitar now?
Fifi: At first it was really hard. I didn't really know what to do with myself up there. But now I'm used to being only the vocalist.

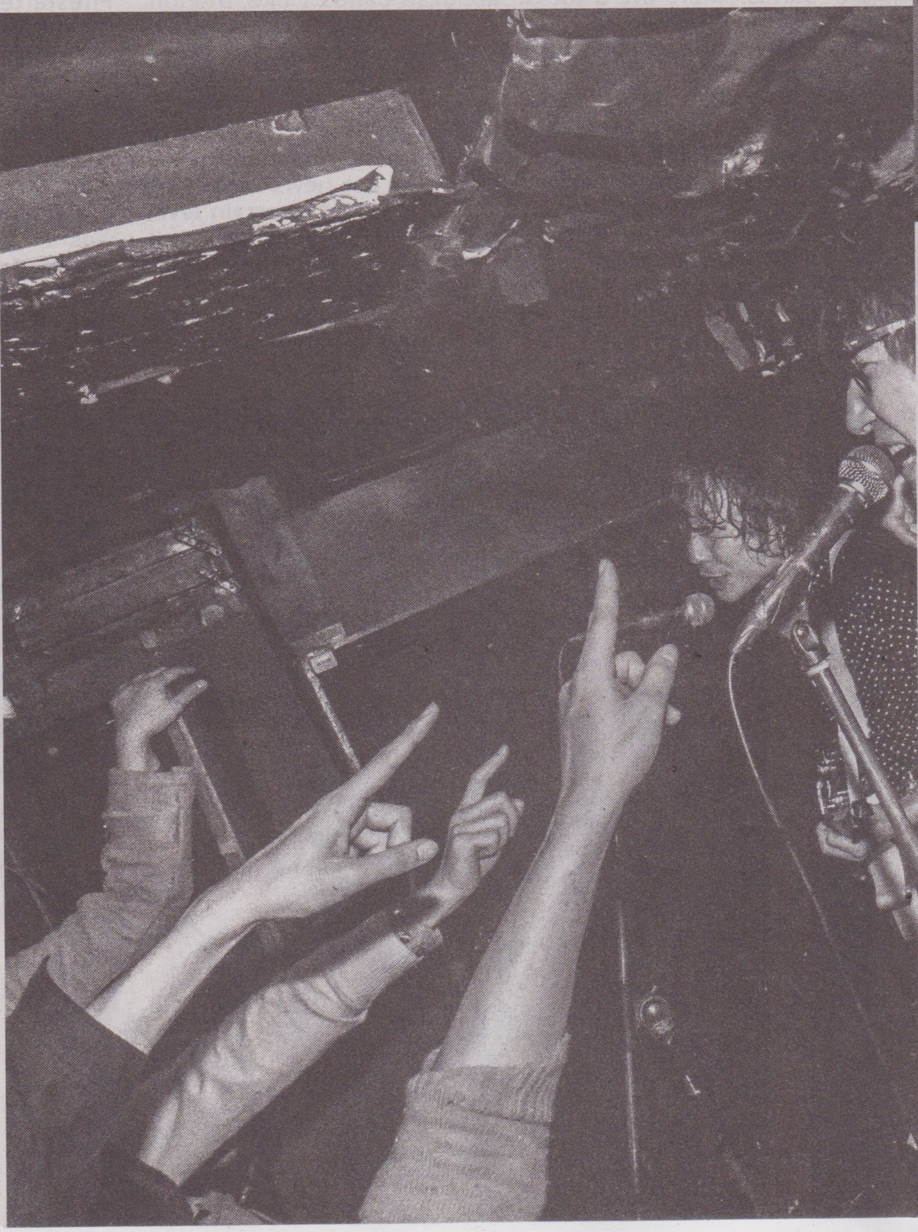
MRR: Fink, why did you decide to continue with Firestarter after that comeback show at Shelter? Did the Teengenerate reunion show in Tokyo in 2013 have anything to do with it?
Fink: The Firestarter show went well. That's why I decided to stay.

MRR: How did the release of the Teengenerate documentary *Get Action* affect all of you?
Fifi: It definitely felt significant with the release of the movie and the TG reunion show combined. I'm grateful they made a movie about us.

MRR: "Get Action" tells the story of Teengenerate as a band that burned brightly over the course of a few years. In contrast to this, you recently celebrated Firestarter's twentieth anniversary. Why do you think Firestarter has been able to keep going for so long, whereas Teengnerate broke up after just a few years?
Fifi: Even though we've been together twenty years, Firestarter really only played out hard until around the time we released the second album. After that, we went on a long hiatus. There really isn't any particular reason we've stayed together so long.

MRR: Firestarter has never played in the U.S. In 2005 Fifi, Fink, Jimbo, and Azumi (from Raydios, Ruler, and Young Ones) played a show in Brooklyn, and another in Hoboken, as Teengenerate. However, you did play a few Firestarter, as well as Raydios, songs in the set. Can you all reflect on that experience and what it was like for you to play in the USA ten years or so after Teengenerate's heyday?
Fifi: In 2005, we were invited to play as Teengenerate. At the time I was doing Firestarter and Fink was doing Raydios, so naturally we wanted to play the songs we were doing in our then-current bands. We only played two shows on that trip, but we had played a lot in the US before. Things seemed pretty much the same in the States as they were when TG played there back in the '90s, so it didn't feel out of the ordinary to be playing there for the first time in ten years.

MRR: Jimbo, you played drums for Teengenerate for the U.S. reunion shows in 2005. What was that like?



Jimbo: I wanted to make sure I didn't disappoint American Teengenerate fans who had listened to their records and gone to their shows before. I didn't want people to think the drums sounded way different because there was a different person playing, so I tried to play as fluid as the old Teengenerate sound.

MRR: Fink, you played the Burger Boogaloo in Oakland last year doing Teengenerate songs with the Thunderroads backing you. What was this experience like?
Fink: It was pretty easy playing Teengenerate songs at the Burger Boogaloo in 2016. Teengenerate played the Bay Area a bunch back in the '90s and a lot of my old friends came out to see me, which made it nice.

MRR: What was the deciding factor in playing the Burger Boogaloo?
Fink: The organizers of Burger Boogaloo started inviting Teengenerate to play a couple years prior to when I came in 2016. We declined the offer mainly because of my brother's condition—his fingers were in no shape to play a whole set. Eventually, the idea of the Thunderroads backing me up playing Teengenerate songs came up. But I was still on the fence because I thought if I was the only Teengenerate member it would be disappointing to the audience. But Marcos from the Burger Boogaloo and Aya from San Francisco kept on asking me to play, so I finally gave in. Plus, my work was actually giving me a couple of days off at that time, so at that point I really didn't have much of a reason to turn them down.

MRR: This summer Firestarter will be playing a one-off show at the Burger Boogaloo, marking the very first time the band has ever played a show outside Japan. Is it the current Firestarter lineup that's coming to the US?
Fifi: Yeah, all five of us—the current line-up—will be playing at the Burger Boogaloo this year.

MRR: Is there anything you are looking forward to about being on the West Coast, or about playing the Boogaloo?
Fifi: I'm stoked to go record shopping.

MRR: And how do you feel about the current US immigration laws? We've had quite a few bands from overseas turned away upon arrival in the US with the Trump administration in charge.
Fifi: As far as entering the US goes, we shouldn't have any problem even though I hear it's gotten real tough with the Trump administration. We're working on figuring out the best way to handle it.
Sammy: I'm just looking at it from the perspective of an outsider, but I can tell Trump's a dick.
Jimbo: I remember going to the US with Teengenerate in 2005. It wasn't too long after 9/11, so the immigration was pretty tough then too.

MRR: What can fans who come to see you at the Burger Boogaloo expect from your performance?
Fifi: We're just going to give it all we got!

MRR: And we'll finish this up with another question from Mitch. *What's the deal with Sammy, the man of mystery?* We want to know more about Sammy!
Sammy: No way man. I'm not telling. You wanna know more about me? Then you gotta listen to my soul band, the Winstons! We have two singles out. Go get it!

Firestarter's only US date is July 1st in Oakland, CA at the Burger Boogaloo

firestarter.bandcamp.com

My first time seeing Fashionism was their first show in their hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in July 2014. They had played one show previous to that in Bellingham, Washington, opening for the Briefs. I'd been living in Vancouver for a month and the only thing I knew about the local scene was that I had to see Fashionism. I'd been a fan of Jeffrey McCloy's bands Tranzmitors and New Town Animals for years and when I heard he had a new band, I was very excited.

A few songs into their set of high-energy power pop, punctuated with a cover from the Rocky Horror sequel Shock Treatment, my mind was made up. I asked Fashionism's bass player Robin Schroffel immediately after their set if I could put out their debut 7". Luckily, she said yes. Fast forward a few years, and the members have all become close personal friends in addition to a band I work with through my label, Hosehead. I even met my girlfriend when she bought the single from me.

In the years since, Fashionism have played almost every venue in town, toured around Canada and the Pacific Northwest, and released singles on three more labels—Zaxxon, Dirt Cult, and their band-run Neon Taste. This spring a new 7" and a compilation LP, Smash Singles, are due out on England's Drunken Sailor Records in anticipation of their first tour abroad, playing through Finland and the Baltics—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—for two weeks in May.

FASHIONISM

Interview and introduction
by Patrick McEachnie.

Photos by Jay Kearney
and Ryan Walter Wagner.

While comparisons are easy to come by, Fashionism have a fresh take on an old sound, sung through a smirk so wry you're not quite sure what to take seriously and what not to.

I sat down in singer Jeffrey's living room / studio with him, bassist Robin, and guitarist Josh Nickel over tea and biscuits to talk about everything above and more. (Newly off-the-market drummer Alex Angel was away on his honeymoon in Mexico.)

MRR: Robin, do you remember the press release you and I made for the first record? Which bands were listed as references on it?
Jeffrey McCloy: Did we do that? I didn't know this happened.
Robin Schroffel: The Boys. Pointed Sticks. I think Sweet was one of them. Who else?
Josh Nickel: Bay City Rollers? Monty Python?

MRR: Pointed Sticks, Boys, and the Sweet were all on there. The Equals.
Jeffrey: *[Retrieves something from record shelf.]* This is my new Bay City Rollers notebook that I found at a thrift store.
Robin: This isn't Nardwuar.

MRR: This also isn't a video. Mud was also on there.
Josh: We tried to cover a Mud song, "Under The Moon Of Love."

MRR: How did it go?
Robin: Poorly.

MRR: Do you think those reference points were an accurate representation of what you ending up being as a band?
Josh & Robin: No. *[Laughter]*

MRR: In hindsight, would you change those references?
Josh: I didn't know this interview was going to be filled with so much regret.
Robin: I don't think we'd change it. That's what we wanted to sound like, but it unfortunately didn't happen.
Jeffrey: If we started the band today, we'd use the exact same references. It would just still not work. Again.
Josh: When we first started we had a very different vision of what we wanted to be.
Jeffrey: Yeah, like you had a cape.
Josh: That's true.
Jeffrey: You were going to wear a cape, and that never happened. You did have that sort of Data makeup on that one time. The 1930s mime face paint.
Josh: I was going for the silver MC5 look.
Jeffrey: Well, did we ever not get that.

MRR: So your vision when the band started was very different. There's the cape, but what can you tell me about the podium?
Jeffrey: The podium was genius. Initially, this band was going to be an avenue for me to share my genius moment thoughts with people. And I was going to do it from behind a podium, like a sort of rally. But then we realized the logistics of showing up to a show with a podium that was going to be the same size as one of those Ampeg fridges. It was just going to suck.
Robin: We saw one for sale at the antique store on Commercial Drive. Josh said no. Also, Jeff, you would definitely hurt yourself. You bleed out of nowhere.

MRR: Why did you decide to ditch it? Just size?
Josh: It was supposed to be one of those things that like, Marilyn Manson looks really cool behind that podium…but he's got someone who's going to load his stuff in for him. We also at one point decided that this band was going to be a legitimate Vancouver political party, and we never went through with that either.

MRR: You wanted to run in an actual election? Who would have been the leader?
Josh: Jeff, obviously…he has a degree?
Jeffrey: In bullshit.
Josh: So he's almost got a degree. I would have been a liability to the whole party.

MRR: What would have been your platform? What were you running on?
Josh: We never got that far. We just knew we wanted to change the world.
Jeffrey: We knew we wanted to have a flag. And we do have a flag. Flags are great because they're fun in an Eddie Izzard way. You take a flag and you stick it on something. Done.
Josh: It was going to be a great political party. We were going to have rallies and have speeches.

MRR: Like the Rhinoceros Party?
Josh: Yeah.
Jeffrey: No.
Josh: In a way. It wasn't going to be a legit party. It was just going to be a party

party. It was more a piss-take on the general people.
Jeffrey: Oh no, I had world domination views. I was actually thinking party that eventually grows and then I'm able to have some sort of authoritarian rule over the people that I think need to be oppressed.

MRR: Do you even have an authoritarian rule over Fashionism?
Jeffrey: …No. Are you kidding me? This is the first time I've even heard of half the shit we're talking about.
Josh: Jeff doesn't even have a fascist rule over the press… release! Eh? Eh?

MRR: I know that you all come from different parts of Canada, and I'm curious how you all found yourselves in Vancouver.
Jeffrey: Yeah, we all came from really different parts. Josh lived about five minutes away from my house in Kamloops, BC.
Robin: You lived five minutes apart from each other then, and now you live five apartment doors away from each other.
Jeffrey: Yeah, but I haven't lived in Kamloops for almost an entire lifetime. I came to Vancouver in 1997 / 1998.
Josh: I came to Vancouver around ten years ago, in 2007 / 2008. I came here after spending a long time in my hometown and I needed to get out. Kamloops is a miserable place and I was drinking myself to death with regret. My girlfriend and I came out here to, I guess, make a big go of it in the big city! *[Laughter]* And here we are…Now I'm a rockstar.
Jeffrey: On the upside, you're still with her. I've managed to go through two divorces in that time.

MRR: And why did you come to Vancouver, Jeff?
Jeffrey: Probably just to meet girls? Go skateboarding?
Josh: Kamloops is also very small. It's like the city is Vancouver and Kamloops is just the weird shitty neighborhood you live in. You move out—you have to. It's the same rule with any small, shitty town that you grow up in. You need to leave, because if you don't leave, you lose. It's like you just failed. And I failed for a long time.

MRR: Robin, you moved here from Edmonton, right?
Robin: Yeah, which is bigger than Kamloops, but it's still a small town compared to Vancouver. I needed a change. I lived in Toronto for a while, where I owned a record store, then I moved back to Edmonton and stayed for a couple years. I didn't want to go back to Toronto, but I didn't want to stay in Edmonton—I felt like I was doing as much as I could do there. So in 2012 I came to Vancouver instead.

MRR: Since you've been in Vancouver, I'm curious what trends and subcultures you've seen come and go in the punk scene.
Jeffrey: I've seen three recycles of people. Generations. In twenty-plus years, you see the turnover of almost three entire scenes. The circle of people that I first started going to shows with would have been when the Piccadilly Pub was a good venue to go to, around the mid-'90s. All the Lookout! Records bands were still happening; I was involved with all that. There's a handful of people from that circle that still consistently play in bands and go to shows.

The next generation was in around the year 2000. You'd see bands like the Black Halos and that sort of rock'n'roll revival that was happening around that time.
Josh: That would have been the post-Sub Pop Black Halos, when they were the biggest band in the world. Or so we thought in Vancouver.
Jeffrey: That was really fun. There were tons of drugs and tons of partying. Of that chunk of people, there's only a handful that you still see around.

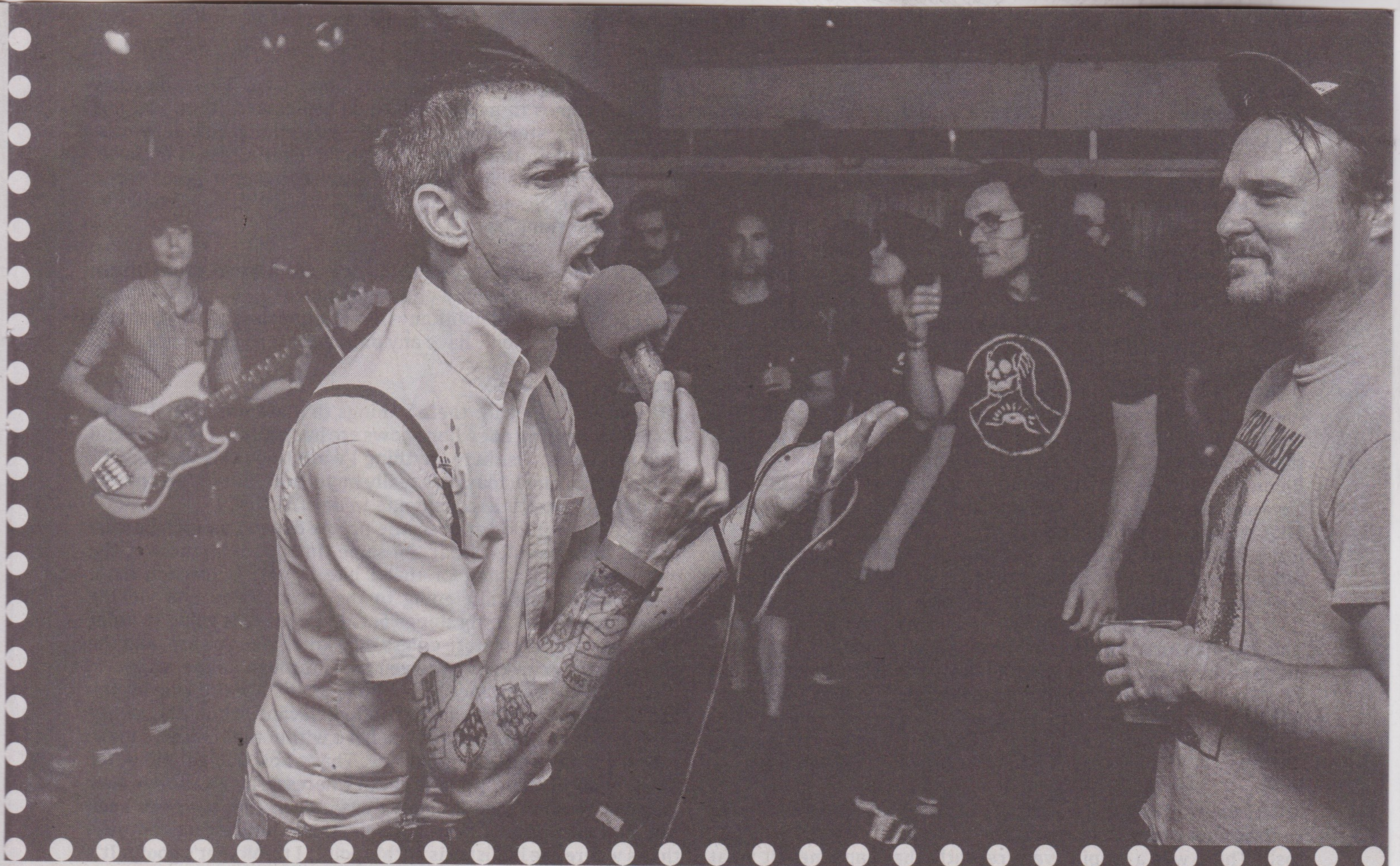
The next wave was a really cool art-punky scene that went along with the venue the Emergency Room. Vapid was always a really fun band to go see. White Lung, Defektors, there was a whole string. Tranzmitors played in that timezone too.
Josh: That was when Deranged was doing a lot of local stuff.
Jeffrey: B-Lines were just getting started.

MRR: Do you see the same thing happening again and again, or is each iteration different?
Jeffrey: It's always different. Different bands, different people, and it's all just people with guitars and drums and stuff. There's only so far it goes. I mean it's different, sure, but at this point it's all just people pulling from what other people have done before. I haven't seen anything for a long time that made me feel that it was new or different. They're taking their take on something that's happened. Which is great. I'm fine with that.

MRR: What's Fashionism taking a take on?
Jeffrey: Don't you have a list? I do believe you're the one who wrote it.
Robin: We're not doing anything new; we're just taking the sort of thing that we like, and playing with that.
Josh: The funny thing is that with Fashionism, we didn't actually try to sound like we do at all. We made a conscious effort to not sound like that. We wanted to sound like a big, glammy, punchy, bubblegum rock band. It just…
Josh & Jeffrey: It didn't happen.
Jeffrey: And we tried! The beauty of it is that we thought we should be those things.
Josh: We tried to cover a Mud song! We all know how to play, but we still couldn't do it. It just wasn't natural to us. It was really forced.
Jeffrey: It also had a lot to do with our outfits. If we had those outfits like Mud have going on, with some kind of platforms and more flare…Some bigger chops and maybe some cop glasses or something. I think if we had more of that vibe it would have sounded different.
Josh: There would have been more play acting.
Jeffrey: There's something absolutely real about looking the way you sound. You deliver it that way. I'm a fan of that stuff.
Josh: And as much as I'm a fan of that stuff, some of those bands that are doing that right now are…not very good.

MRR: You mean glam revival?
Josh: Yeah…I don't think there's a lot of that stuff that is legitimately good.
Jeffrey: I don't think there's any bands I know of that are active right now that are fully a glam revival band. I think there are bands that are hard-rocky at times. There's that budget Oi! thing going on, where it's geared towards that, but they don't sound like what it is.
Josh: Mostly I'm saying that when people try too hard to make those records sound the way that they do now, it comes across really contrived. I'm really glad it didn't end up being that way with us because I think that even though we do sound like certain bands, it's more by accident than it is on purpose.
Jeffrey: I think if you wore that cape, though, it would have come across a bit better. I often look over at you and think you'd play better if you had a cape on.

MRR: Speaking of your fashion, on stage and in your art you've always had a very strong aesthetic, with a specific color scheme of blue, white and black. I'm curious how important you think it is for a band to have a distinct look or fashion sense.
Josh: When Jeff and I had the idea for this band, one of the first things we talked about was the irritation of seeing some bands in Vancouver, which is already known to be a pretty



horrendously poorly styled city, kind of showing up and mailing everything in—from crap songs, to wearing a sweatsuit on stage. It was sort of that slacker style, which became really popular for some reason a little while ago. It was a bummer. Jeff came from Tranzmitors, who are a bunch of well-dressed fellas. We wanted to do it up a little bit, so that the band looked like a band. It was a real sort of put-together thing, where you see it and you know that's the band.

It was conscious because we wanted to set ourselves apart. It was easy for Jeff because he was already doing it for a long time in Tranzmitors. When I started playing with him I realized that I don't have any nice clothes, so that was a bit of a problem. But we also didn't want to tie it necessarily into the style from that clothing. It was more about linking up color.

Jeffrey: Tranzmitors was coming from a different headspace. For me this band needed to feel like a band, but it didn't need to be aesthetically the same as the previous bands. The idea was that we would all get on stage and there was something that would link us all together. There's something to be said about that. You see the band and you know that's the band. You see them when they're walking around and hanging out with you at the show. To me, that's always really fun. It creates a sort of instant gang. Sometimes you go to a show and you can't tell who's there. They just slip in. It's one thing to be hanging out and being friendly because you should always be friendly, but you should be fucking cooler than the rest of the people there because you're going to get on that stage. When you're hanging out, everyone is totally dead even, but on stage? You should rule, and if you can't be bothered, then you should fuck off.

MRR: I haven't seen you play live in a little bit, but do you still wear your Fashionism armbands?

Jeffrey: The armbands failed miserably.

Robin: I still wear mine.

Jeffrey: The armbands were technically troublesome. We tried a velcro system, then a pin system, which worked better.

Robin: Most of them were too small. I would like to get us back to being more stringent about the armbands, because I think that was a cool element that tied us together aesthetically. It was a very important part of the band in the beginning, creating an interesting aesthetic, where the emphasis is on other elements in addition to the music. We've gotten a little lazy about that stuff.

Josh: And busy. You can create it all once, but maintaining it gets very difficult.

Jeffrey: Do you remember when I made those two side banners and I rolled them out in the apartment courtyard? They were gigantic. The idea was that when you think of the Roman Empire, they had these gigantic banners.

MRR: You're going to Europe soon, and playing in Estonia, which happens to have the same colors in their flag as you do in yours. Was that intentional?

Jeffrey: The color choice was on purpose, but they're the reverse colors. I chose them. I'm moderately biased because they're the same colors as Chelsea FC.

[Omitted Jeff talking about Chelsea FC for six minutes]

MRR: Why did you choose to tour Northern Europe before touring North America?

Jeffrey: Have you been to America lately? That's not a question.

Robin: For a Canadian band to be able to tour in the U.S. is so expensive. The cost of doing it legally and getting a visa virtually guarantees we wouldn't break even. And it's not worth the risk of getting banned if we get caught sneaking in.

Jeffrey: Don't get me wrong, there's lots of great people and great things in the States, but the logistics of touring the States now as a Canadian is a nightmare. They make it so complicated and hard for you to do it legally that it's easier to go to Egypt. I

don't know why I picked Egypt.
Josh: We're going to Finland and the Baltics. It's a curious tour, but I think it was a great offer.

MRR: Are you concerned about going to Europe with a name like Fashionism?
Jeffrey: No. Why? You can add an -ism onto anything.
Josh: It would be funny and sad if someone connected Fashionism to their ideology. It'd be pretty funny to have someone say they're a fascist and they're like, "Yeah, I'm a fashionist too!" and then they hear fucking Jeff singing. And they're like, "This is the voice! Boots on the ground. This guy is the fucking guy that we need."
Jeffrey: Hey, I have a pretty good worldview. If people wanted to use me as their point of reference for a brighter future for the world, I have some pretty good ideas. And I'd be happy to share them with people should the platform be offered.
Robin: I don't really think about it. There's no connection between our band name and any sort of political statements. That was never our intention.
Josh: We started the band, we thought it was a cheeky band name. But then things in the world got pretty dark. There were a couple of moments there when, oh man. But we can't change it. It's not directly offensive. We're not making fun of anyone. This is a play on words that became a smart, goofy name. It was just a satire in general. It wasn't necessarily built like that, but no one's looked at me and questioned me on it. I think people get it. It would be such a weird thing either way—someone saying, "I can't believe you named your band that," or someone being like, "Yeah, brother! Fashionism!" It's so bizarre both ways.

MRR: Some of those dark things in the world have extended to Vancouver recently, correct?
Josh: There was a stupid event recently that happened at what I consider to be one of our clubs, where an alt-right group came out to a show. They got their asses handed to them, and they threatened vengeance. I'm not a violent guy so much, but I don't have any patience with them. I'm not going to sit down and have a rational conversation with someone who is a real fucking fascist. Especially at a club where there's a show that I'm putting on. I don't want them there. I'm going to ask them to leave. If they don't leave, I'm going to make them leave. I don't entertain it at all.

MRR: How did you find your way into the Air Canada in-flight magazine last summer?
Robin: A photographer came to a show we played in Calgary and took some photos. I only found out about it because the owner of Neptoon Records, where Josh and I work, told me we were in the airline's magazine—someone had torn out the page and brought it into the shop. Unfortunately we flew Air Canada the month after, so we didn't actually get to read our own magazine. Maybe we could have gotten into first class.
Jeffrey: Just so you know, being in the magazine doesn't help. I got bumped off one of their flights on Christmas Eve with my kid.

MRR: Jeff, I wanted to ask you about the song "Nun Of That," and the first line, when you say, "Suspiria said something but I couldn't understand." How do you connect Fashionism to horror and what's your connection with nunsploitation insofar as writing a song about it?
Jeffrey: It's Italian cinema. Most of the nunsploitation films came out of Italy. And they're fucking hot. It's a nun! Oh my god! Let's be honest—actually, let's not be honest.
Robin: Jeff has a nun fetish.
Jeffrey: I do. My ex-wife would dress up like a nun and it was awesome. Here's the thing: essentially the reason why I love those nunsploitation films is because it's a convent. And suddenly, for some reason, all the nuns are hot. And because it's a convent, they're clearly sexually oppressed. Then somehow the devil comes in and makes them sex-crazed, then you just navigate that storyline, and that's essentially how it works. That's nunsploitation. The quote about Tinto Brass is because, if you're familiar with his films, he makes super great erotic cinema. If he were to make a nunsploitation film, it would be the greatest thing ever.

MRR: How important you think it is for a band to maintain an active and responsive online presence?
Jeffrey: I'm going to point out that I'm hopeless when it comes to such things. I don't have any online presence anymore.

MRR: Was it easy?
Jeffrey: Yeah. I mean, there's things that are unfortunate, like it's tricky figuring out when shows are happening. I have to send Josh messages, "Is there anything I want to do this weekend?"
Robin: I think nowadays it's really important, but unfortunately it's difficult and time-consuming to do effectively.
Josh: It's only important because people depend on social media to find information, but at the same time it's like, most of the information that I get, or that I like to get, is through more traditional means, like going to the record store and looking through things, figuring things out. But nobody is going to order your record for their store unless they know who you are, and the only way they can know who you are is through online, so...

It's all a big annoyance. I don't like it. It's a weird way for the bad side of the music industry to stay relevant, where the money you pay and the connections you have within that industry make your band more or less important. That's how you get views for those types of things, and it doesn't necessarily mean that your music is good or bad. It doesn't even mean that it's even been rated; it just means that it's something interesting, because that's where the industry is at this point. I think that's goofy. It's kind of like the Internet opened up this weird thing, where it's all at your fingertips, and then people are like, "I'm just going to jack off instead, because there's this porn." Or I'm just going to look at Pitchfork and the couple main music sites, which all have the exact same thing because all of these labels and publicists throw all their money at them to try and create some sort of buzz around their music. It's all fake. It's all nonsense.
Jeffrey: The other option, which is the option that I've chosen, is to completely remove yourself from things and deem success as, in twenty years from now, having somebody discover the record that nobody cared about, and think that it's rad. That's essentially what I spend most of my time getting excited about.
Robin: The point is that bands unfortunately have to maintain an online presence. There's no way around it. Whenever I put up posters for shows, they're covered the next day. It's not the same as it used to be.

MRR: I took a photo of the Night People [another of Josh's bands] poster on Commercial Drive when they played with Forgotten Rebels. I made the poster, and when I came out of the post office maybe fifteen minutes later, it was already covered up.
Robin: It's a monopoly in Vancouver. If you put up a poster, and you didn't pay the poster guys to do it, they'll come and cover it up or tear them down. Quickly. It's ridiculous.
Jeffrey: And now, if you poster where you're not allowed to poster, they'll go to the venue and give them grief about your show. When the show happens, the venue is unhappy. We're not interested in screwing over the people who are allowing you to have the show. In the glory days of postering, we would put them on everything. We would poster people's fucking cars! New Town Animals were brutal for that. We would poster anything.

MRR: So Jeff, having removed yourself from social media, how do you stay in contact with what's going on in Vancouver?

Jeffrey: I don't. I just go out. And I text Josh. I will admit that I can't just look up shows, and that's the only thing I really cared about. I was wasting time on social media. I would rather be reading a book, or working in the studio, or hanging out having a coffee and chatting. I just wasn't getting what I want out of it, so that was that. And it's fine.

Josh: I don't think that the way the internet has been created and commandeered is conducive to actually supporting the underground. So I do think that there will be a sort of return, or at least a stay within print and longform stuff. But I don't see that being a solution. When that was the only way to do things, it cost 25 cents for a stamp. Now it costs almost $1.50, so there are some weird hurdles just to find out information through those mediums. Filtering through the amount of absolute fucking bullshit online is trying. When you see publications like *Razorcake* and *MRR* that are struggling to really maintain even just their general sense, it's disheartening.

Jeffrey: Unfortunately it's because they don't have the glory years things of punk points and Don't Tell Tim, and all those George Tabb stories about hanging out in Florida. I mean…I just aged myself. That was funny! People bought into it as a gossip rag!

MRR: I also wanted to ask you about keyboard players. You had two in a pretty short time, and you've settled on zero.

Josh: The thing we've realized about keyboard players is that they don't matter.

Jeffrey: The thing about keyboard players is you're better off just letting me play it in the studio.

Robin: We work so well as four people together and eventually realized that adding anyone else to the mix slows things down. We probably would have been more productive and released more records if we hadn't spent so much time this past year trying to fit other individuals and their schedules into ours. Keyboards are fun, but in hindsight, it was better the way it was originally and is now—just the four of us.

MRR: When you look back, is there a mistake you've made? Or a regret?

Josh: Making a pedal board that usually doesn't work is a recurrent mistake I make. I regret signing with Hosehead Records.

MRR: Sorry.

Josh: Joking. I don't think I have any major regret with this band. Things are pretty good. This is a simple band to be in. We write well together, and we put out songs. I regret not playing more shows. Sometimes we're so busy personally that we just can't play shows during the week. It's not anybody's fault; it's just the reality of life. We have to pick and choose, and do things the way we can.

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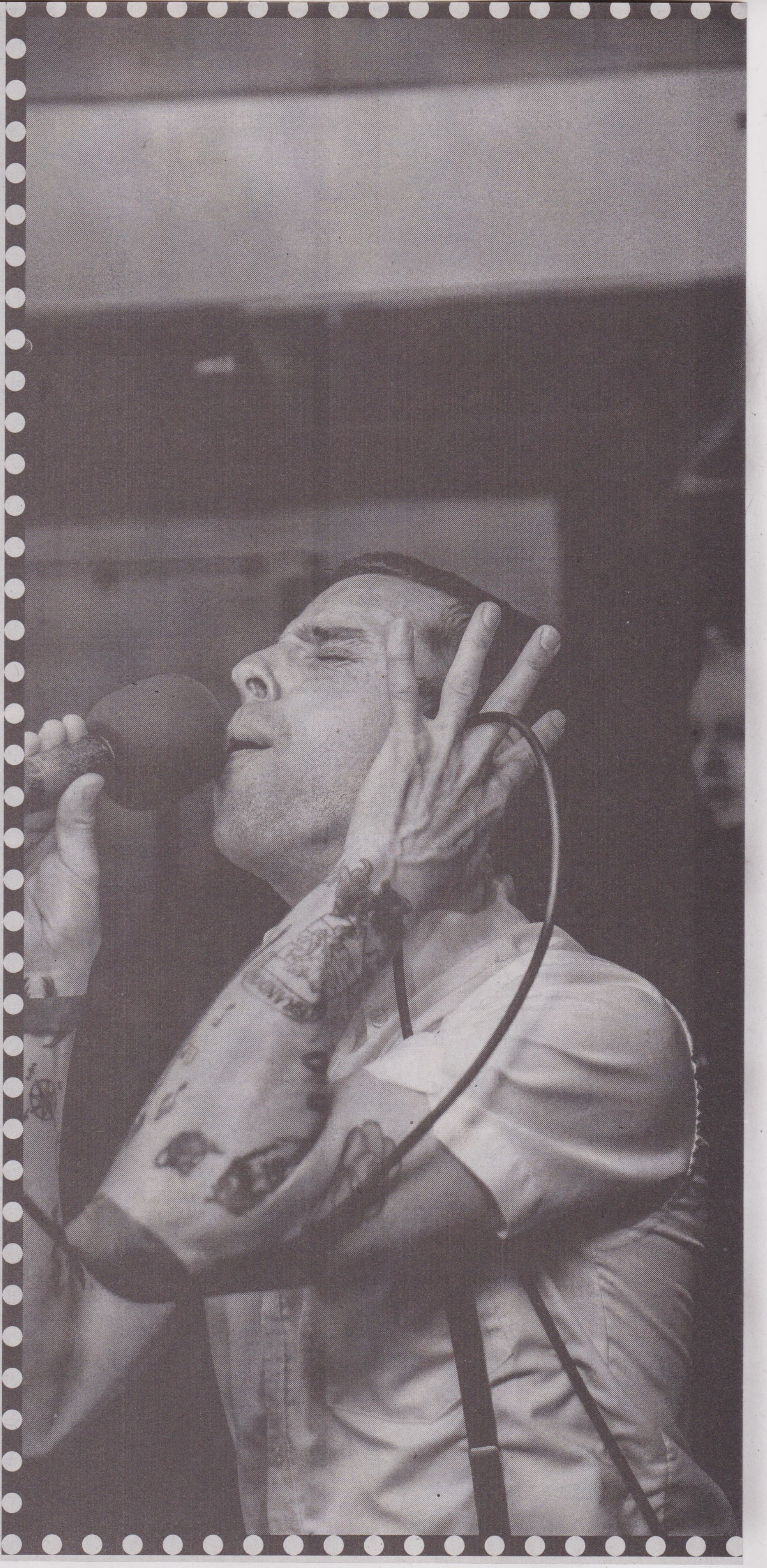

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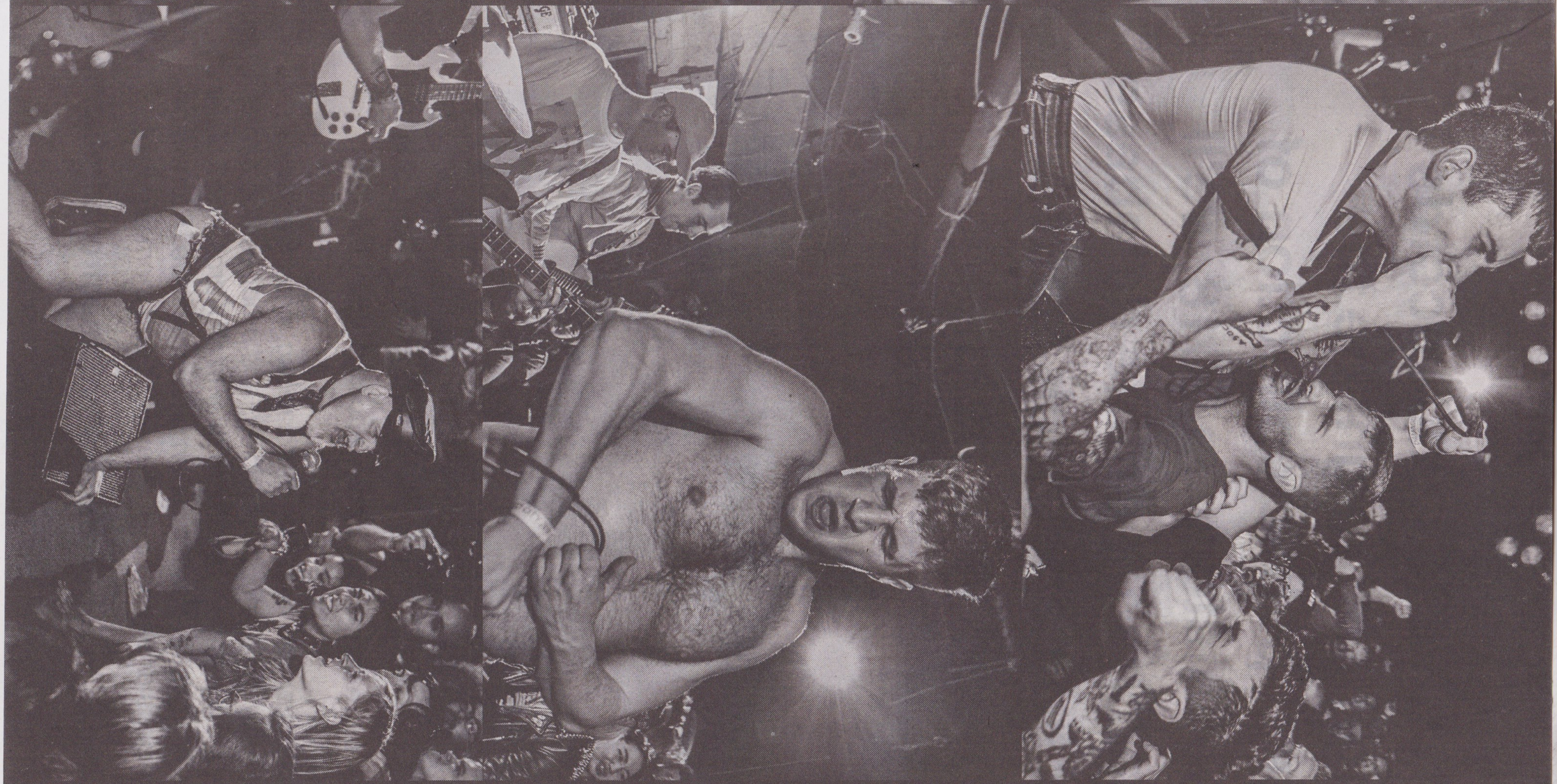

DAMAGED CITY
WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 5 –8, 2018

PHOTOS BY ANGELA OWENS (AO) AND FARRAH SKEIKY (FS).
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NANDAS (FS), RAZORBUMPS (AO), ARMS RACE (AO), THE FLEX (AO), LIMP WRIST (AO), BLACK SAGE (FS), EXOTICA (FS), BIB (FS)

The *MRR* Archive (51,000 records and counting!) just might be the world's largest public collection of punk material history. In 2018, we'll launch a searchable online database of our collection and back issues. But first we need your help!

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NO LOVE

Introduction and interview by Megan March.

Photographs by Matt Bell.

I first discovered No Love when I was booking a tour for my band a couple years back and a friend recommended I check them out. To my jaded surprise, their recordings blew me away. I was reminded of Bay punk legends Black Fork, Olympia freak punks Vexx, or the more melodic jammers from D.I.R.T., but they had something else that really hooked me. We ended up playing a show together, and I became equally hooked on the people as well, enough to include them on a compilation that my label, Nervous Intent, put out. They are a busy crew, doing everything from running Sorry State Records and distro, to radio shows, to dj-ing K-Pop dance nights, to a deep dedication to unruly cats. You'd think I would know everything about these folks, huh? Wrong! Check out this interview, in which they divulge their deepest darkest secrets—ranging from anxiety to cat inspirations, inner scene politics, embarrassing first punk show memories, and their upcoming debut full length!

MRR: How did you all get into punk? Embarassing first show stories welcome.

Elizabeth: I got into punk from my brother. When I was around twelve years old I used to watch him play Everquest and other MMORPGs and he would listen to stuff like Hole, Lagwagon, NOFX, etc. I didn't have friends and I was constantly on the computer, so I'd go on Limewire or whatever and look for similar things. From the age of twelve to seventeen I think I went through a phase of every type of punk, from street punk to folk punk. I was a really embarrassing youth, but I think I've grown into a less embarrassing adult.

Seth: I grew up in a small town and kind of had small glimpses of it and liked what I heard. I would buy anything that seemed punk when I was able to get to a music store, especially compilations. My taste was not good and incredibly uninformed. I played in a couple bands when I was around fourteen to sixteen which mostly were influenced by anything we deemed as "alternative" which was kind of anything we felt wasn't mainstream (even though a lot of it was). Getting a car and being able to go to shows in the city (Charlotte, NC) helped me kind of identify with some of the more underground aspects, but the music scene there was garbage. Really, it was coming up to house shows in Raleigh when I first found what I think of as punk and a punk community.

Daniel: I was born in 1979, and there are a lot of punks my age because Nirvana hit it big right when I was about twelve years old and starting to look for a subcultural identity to affiliate myself with. I grew up on a farm in a small, rural town in Virginia so there really weren't any older punks to show me the way. After I heard Nirvana, I just followed the breadcrumb trail, watching who wore what t-shirts and who thanked whom in the liner notes. That led me pretty quickly to stuff like Minor Threat and Black Flag, which had a really big impact on me. I'm naturally a shy person, so I really didn't start to get involved with the scene in a creative capacity until my mid-20s.

Osamu: I got into punk through people I knew in high school when I was around fourteen. My friend Will, who was into punk way before me, introduced me to a lot of bands and burned me CDs when I first showed interest. I grew up in a relatively small town (Wilmington, NC), but we did have the benefit of having older punks to show us things we didn't have access to at whatever awful chain music store was at the mall. Not the first show that I attended, but the first show I played was at my high school's battle of the bands (in the gym) and it was not well received. We had been a band for a week and I believe covered a Charles Bronson song. I showed a video of it to my mom recently and she laughed until she cried.

Chris: I will go ahead and say I am the punk baby in this band having only branched out to more explicitly punk related music within the past five years. I have always liked weirdos and weird bands but it wasn't until I moved to Raleigh that I started getting a grasp of what punk encompasses. The rural area I grew up in was pretty bleak as far as culture and mindfulness, so to stand out me and some friends played in really bad metal bands, with lyrics explaining how terrible everyone was that lived in Caldwell County. We played a handful of shows, one of which was at Ground Zero in Spartanburg. The headliner, Sid Wilson of Slipknot, was doing a solo tour. I believe I was fifteen. It was such a weird night. I am honestly proud for having this incredibly strange memory. Anyway I moved to the "big city" and learned myself. Punk is great, or as Jeff Young says, "Punk is fuckin sick!"

MRR: No Love have been going in one form or another since 2012, which is quite an accomplishment for a punk band, or any band for that matter. What's your secret?

Daniel: I have a few potential explanations. One is that we fill a void in our local and regional scenes...There aren't a lot of bands like us who straddle the line between hardcore and more melodic styles of punk, so there are always shows to play. Second, we've never hit a brick wall in terms of the band's artistic growth. Each new batch of songs that we write feels like it's new and exciting and not just a rehash of the same ideas, which hasn't been the case with every band I've been in. Third, and maybe this one is just me, but I felt from the start that we had something pretty special going on, even if we struggled for a long time to lock onto exactly what that was. Everyone in the band is just great at what they do... Osamu is a killer bass player and seems to write the music for all of our best songs, Seth's loosey-goosey rock'n'roll guitar playing always takes our arrangements to places I never thought they'd go, and Elizabeth is by far the most talented vocalist and lyricist I've ever played with. Both of our drummers have been extremely capable as well. That's no slight against any of the members of my other bands, but I know that if No Love fell apart whoever I ended up playing with wouldn't be nearly as good, or at the very least not good in the same way. Maybe some combination of those three adds up to the reason why we're still together.

Elizabeth: Wow, Daniel, that was so nice, I'm gonna cry. I've never thought about how we've been together this long, it doesn't really seem that long to me. But maybe that's because No Love is my first band so I don't have anything else to compare it to. Does that make sense?

Osamu: Daniel / Sorry State played a big part of it. He put out the majority of our releases, printed our merch early on, and made sure we had a practice space when our last one got torn down (to name just a few things).

Chris: I have only been playing with No Love since this past fall but I will say that six years as a band is an accomplishment.

MRR: Please explain the Raleigh / Durham / Chapel Hill trifecta of punk, and how does No Love fit into this nexus? Are you all from the area?

Daniel: Like I said before, I'm from Virginia and moved here from Richmond in 2002, when I was about 22 years old. Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill are no further than twenty miles away from one other, which is close enough that if you want to travel between them it's pretty easy, but far enough (and riddled with traffic enough) that people complain about that traveling constantly. When the band started, Seth and Elizabeth lived in Raleigh, Osamu and I lived in greater Chapel Hill (actually the sleepy little hippie town of Carrboro), and our original drummer Dave lived in Durham, so we represented the whole Triangle. If I may be so bold as to speak for the entire band we've always been committed to partaking in and contributing to the creative energy of all the cities.

MRR: Elizabeth, you have a really fierce stage presence, who are your front person inspirations?

Elizabeth: Not a person, but my biggest inspiration is probably anxiety. I get really anxious and I can't stop moving and I can't control my facial expressions. It has created some very terrifying pictures.

MRR: It's hard to not bring up politics in our current climate. Do politics inform your music? If so, how so?

Elizabeth: Daniel and I write a majority of the lyrics, so I can't speak for him, but when I write it tends to be about personal things in my life. I overthink and obsess over things sometimes so writing and shouting in public about it helps me, like, get it out I guess? But also I'm not super confident in my writing and in the past when I've tried to write something political it just felt redundant or cheesy as fuck. I did actually write one recently that I do not hate though.

Daniel: Yeah, I have a lot of ideas about politics, but I've had trouble translating those into actual lyrics. I've wanted for a long time to write a song about people who express their political views on social media and then declare, "delete me if you don't agree." It's such a weird phenomenon that there should be a song about it, but I can't seem to sum it up in a witty little turn of phrase. So, instead, No Love ends up with another song about cats.

MRR: There's been some complicated dynamics in your region with fascist and neo-Confederate rallies recently, as well as really strong anti-fascist push back. What's your take on how this affects and plays into the punk and art scenes in the area, if at all?

Daniel: We're all against that shit. Speaking for myself, though, growing up in the South you have to learn to pick your battles or you'll get exhausted pretty quickly because there's just so much to be mad about. I'm sure there are plenty of people who view that as a cop-out, and growing up with that attitude has probably led me to be less politically active than I really should be. It's something I wrestle with inside my own head a lot but rarely express.

MRR: I really like the song "Choke On It," was it inspired by a specific event?

Elizabeth: Yes. I don't want to go into details about the event, but I'll just say that it's about those people you encounter in life who like to take everything they hate about themselves and project those things on to other people. People who make decisions that don't end well for them and then they try to make other people take the blame or take people down with them. Or something like that.

MRR: Both Daniel and Seth work at the Sorry State Record store (store and record label run by Daniel) which means you both basically listen to records for a living. How do you keep things "fresh" both to your ears when you listen to other bands, and when writing your own songs?

Daniel: I actually still have a day job (I'm an English professor at NC State University), so I don't technically listen to records for a living, at least not yet. I do listen to quite a bit of music, though, but it's easy for me not to rip other things off because I'm generally not talented enough to figure out how other people are doing the cool things they're doing.

Seth: I also do a radio show so I'm constantly listening to new music, I spend lots of time finding stuff I've never heard either new and old. I definitely always end up with new ideas on how to approach songwriting and structure through new music. No Love is the first band that I've played guitar in and so my writing has definitely changed over the years, and it's definitely been influenced by hearing new and different ways of how to approach playing guitar.

MRR: No Love are working on a new record, which I've heard is already recorded! When can we expect to hear the fruits of your labors?

Daniel: It's at the pressing plant now, so hopefully we'll get test pressings sometime in April or early May and the record will be out early this summer!

MRR: Who are some of your favorite local bands, and what do you describe as local?

Seth: I consider locals as pretty much any band from here to Charlotte only because I'd want to add Patois Counselors to the list. North Carolina and the triangle especially have so many great bands and I really want to list them all. Fitness Womxn, Floor Model, Public Acid, Bodykit, Vittna, Scarecrow, Natural Causes, Housefires, Das Drip, Spongebath, Essex Muro, Drugcharge, Skemäta, ISS and all the other weirdos and freaks in the area making music.

Daniel: There are so many good bands here. I'm sure most people think that about their scene but it really is true of North Carolina. While we haven't formally announced it yet (though I'm sure we will have by the time this sees print), Sorry State is working on a compilation of North Carolina punk bands that will hopefully serve as the definitive list of hotness (at least as it stood at the tail end of 2017 when we put it together).

Elizabeth: I don't know, I think I would consider any band that's within an hour drive from Raleigh to be local? I definitely agree with Seth and Daniel, there so many good bands here. I would say at the moment Scarecrow, ISS and Drugcharge would be at the top of my list. They are some true freaks and A+ people.

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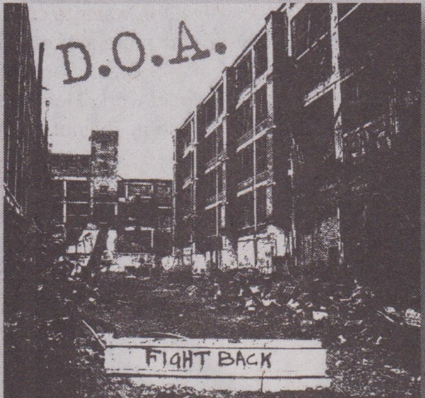

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MOVIES

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HOW CAN YOU RUN AND PLOT AT THE SAME TIME?

The music venue usually gets a low position on the “importance in the scene” rankings. Sure, you will feel a bit nostalgic about it when it’s gone and wish there was a place like it around these days. It always comes to down to what was done with the space, who played there, who showed up. But if it wasn’t for the space itself, you really wouldn’t have all those good times.

The Outhouse The Film 1985–1997 is about a venue in Lawrence, Kansas. To paraphrase Henry Rollins in the documentary, this place could not have happened in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington DC, or Boston. It couldn’t have. The biggest advantage of the Outhouse was space. The Outhouse was a cement building surrounded by corn fields. The owner, Donny Mellenbruch, is your typical sleazy landlord who did not really care what happened with the place as long as he got paid. Mellenbruch rented the spot to kids who wanted a place to party. It began to evolve when the local radio station KJHK got involved and bands started getting booked.

In its short existence, the Outhouse hosted some amazing shows, from Black Flag to the Replacements to Gwar to Fugazi to Body Count. The Outhouse had the advantage of location. Kansas is in the middle of the country. It was a convenient tour stop between the bigger cities. Fortunately, the shows ended being so much fun that the bands eventually made it a must stop location. I am personally impressed that even with the increasing crowds and higher profile bands, the venue continued to be run by people who were involved in the scene, with no security. New bookers would take over, but there never seemed to be a need to change how things operated. That attitude makes it all the more surprising that the documentary only recounts one instance of someone stealing the door money. In that cas,e it was the show’s booker, Tad Kepley who is interviewed for the film.

Director Brad Norman gets **The Outhouse The Film 1985–1997** so right. Everyone who was involved, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, is interviewed: the owner, the people who put on the shows, the bands, the people who went to the shows, the neighbors who had legitimate complaints against the noise and drunk kids, even the sheriff called to bust up the shows. There is plenty of video footage, photographs and fliers to flesh out the talking heads. I usually maintain that most documentaries should be at the most one hour long. However, in the case of **The Outhouse The Film 1985–1997**, its two hours were so entertainingly outlandish I was not bored once. Any place where Ice T can’t say enough good things about it while also fearing for his life is a rare locale. The Outhouse was a truly unique venue. (theouthousethefilm.com)

We live in such painful political times that it sometimes seems like what is currently happening in our government is the worst ever. I am not sure if it is a relief to know that historically things were worse and we have the potential of going much farther down. Still, **The Death Of Stalin** managed to be an escape from the non-stop Trump sideshow.

The Death Of Stalin is an absurd look at the behind the scenes political maneuvering of the Soviet Union’s Council of Ministers following the death of Joseph Stalin. The film asserts that Stalin dies after reading an insulting note from a pianist whom he admires. Was this actually how it happened? I hope so. His sudden death leaves no named successor, so Khrushchev, Malenkov, Molotov, Beria, and other members of the government bumble their way through ,scheming against each other, forming alliances, and maintaining a somber, mourning face. That these characters are played by some of the best comedians makes the film so weirdly enjoyable. It reinforces the notion that government is too important to be left to those politicians who want it so badly. (facebook.com/TheDeathOfStalin)

Hedy Lamar was a movie star in the 1950s. She was also an inventor. **Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story** tells her fascinating story.

Lamar was born in Austria. She was a teenage actress who became infamous for a controversial film, **Ecstasy**. At nineteen, she married Austrian arms dealer Friedrich Mandl. Both Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini attended parties at their house. Mandl was a jealous and controlling man. He spied on her. As a result, Lamarr plotted an escape, which led her to England, where she met the head of the movie studio MGM, Louis B Mayer. She moved to the United States and became a movie star.

Lamarr was also an amateur inventor. Her personal association with Austria and the Nazis inspired her to want to do something to help the United States troops fighting in World War II. Her first attempt was unsuccessful. She tried to make Coca-Cola in a dried form so it could be sent to the troops on the front, who would dissolve it in water to create the refreshing beverage. Her second invention was more successful. With pianist George Antheil, she created frequency-hopping. She gave her patent to the US Navy, who did not think it would work. However, they kept the patent and years later they would use it. Eventually, it would become the basis for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.

Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story is inspirational, but there is also a typical Hollywood downside. Movie stars are judged on their looks, and Lamarr was aware of what it would take to survive in the system. She may not have ended her career on a high note, but her incredible journey there more than made up for it. (zeitgeistfilms.com)

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THE NEW
Listening and Reconnecting in a Digital World
Damon Krukowski
ANALOG

The New Analog: Listening and Reconnecting in a Digital World
by Damon Krukowski
The New Press, 2017
226 pgs | $24.95

Newer *MRR* readers might not have been alive when the Great CD Wars were fought monthly in these very pages. The music industry's shift to compact disc as the chief vehicle for new music in the '90s brought upheaval: CDs, after all, were kinda punk in that they were cheap to produce and ship. But the thought of converting one's record collection to the more current format—for turntables and new vinyl were very much on the wane when CD players were in vogue—was an impediment, as was the ridiculous markup major labels put on the new digital medium, to say nothing of artists being paid less per unit for a product that cost more. We could argue that this record industry greed and price gouging was the impetus to shift from physical product to online files when Napster started right before the turn of the century, and that the industry's greed around CDs has left us with today's mess. Nowadays, the general public sees music either as free or available for the pittance that is a monthly subscription fee to streaming services. I'd like to think that the punk community adheres more to the old model and still supports artists directly via buying records and going to shows. In that way, at least, analog has won over digital. I think a lot of the argument above is fairly common knowledge. Damon Krukowski, of Damon and Naomi and Galaxie 500, has added to the argument / discussion with his excellent *The New Analog: Listening and Reconnecting In A Digital World.*

Krukowski starts his discussion by mentioning the oft-cited Moore's Law, which states that technology doubles in power every eighteen months. He takes things a step further by adding Murphy's Law to the equation: whatever can go wrong *will* go wrong. Krukowski melds the two by saying "if aspects of a given technology functioned better before the introduction of integrated circuits, they must be getting worse at the same fantastic rate." Everyone knows—or is—someone who consciously (and sometimes vocally) abstains from all forms of social media and digital entertainment, which can be liberating but restricting. Krukowski acknowledges this kind of behavior as "quixotic," and representative of a binary yes-or-no, analog-or-digital question that isn't always valid.

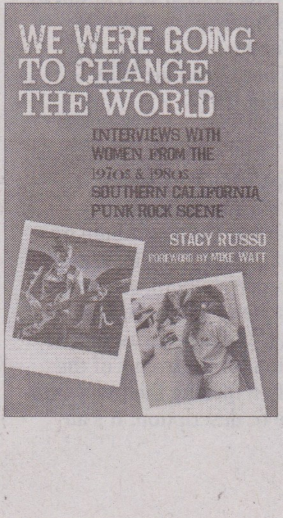
He posits that "we need to look more carefully at what was working well for us in the analog realm, so we don't destroy it in the rush of digital construction," using the ideas of urban planner Jane Jacobs as a model. Jacobs's work in the sixties was critical of housing developments, which offered "modern convenience" (quotes mine) but stripped away all of the neighborhood color and flavor that make city living so exhilarating. We don't need things to be either this way or that way; in other word, they can be a blend of both analog and digital, new and old, if the blend has efficacy.

Krukowski's model often relates back to the idea of signal-to-noise ratio: the intended information is the signal; everything else is the noise. Through digital recording, all noise can be removed from a session, which we're led to believe can be beneficial. But any good punk fan knows that noise *rules*. Sometimes the space between the intended information being filled with non-intended or accidental information can add to or be more interesting than the intended info.

Throughout the book, Krukowski applies the signal-to-noise discussion to different scenarios. Let's take record shopping as an example. The modern, digital way to shop for records is simple: type in a web address. The old model finds us in a record store, flipping through a bin for the new rec we want. In flipping, we might come across an old favorite, or a record with an intriguing, weird cover that calls out to be bought. Part of the thrill of record shopping is finding the unexpected, whether an odd gem or an unexpected old favorite. Certainly the digital model of clicking and receiving a digital record immediately or a record through the mail a few days later is more efficient, but this is also part of Krukowski's discussion. With so much music, *so much* media available to us, the need to consume replaces the need to ruminate. Krukowski says "close listening is a function of time...I for one find myself clicking through a good deal of digital music...I skip around and I preview tracks. My digital listening is to signal alone. I hear the notes but not the space between, or the depth below. It's listening to the surface without the noise." Streams and free music, in other words, are so abundant that they devalue the listening experience.

Using so many examples grounded in the real world, Krukowski does a thoughtful, thorough job of investigating the new digital / analog paradigm, ultimately concluding that there are different ways to value digital media. Yes, noise is removed and signal is boosted, but what would a band like Black Flag sound like without Greg Ginn's trademark guitar squall?

—Michael T. Fournier


WE WERE GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD
INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN FROM THE 1970s & 1980s SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PUNK ROCK SCENE
STACY RUSSO
FOREWORD BY MIKE WATT

We Were Going to Change the World: Interviews with Women from the 1970s and 1980s Southern California Punk Rock Scene
Stacy Russo
Santa Monica Press, 2017
311 pages | $16.95

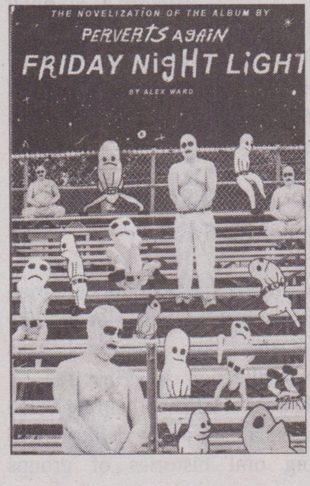
Stacy Russo, an Orange County librarian and writer, respects and elevates the voices of those she interviews. This interview collection was inspired by an oral history workshop held by Voice of Witness, a non-profit dedicated to preserving oral histories of groups affected by injustice. To minimize framing by the interviewer and to focus on the interviewee's voice, Russo deliberately avoids Q&A style interviews, opting instead to give each woman her own chapter in which to share her experience on the early SoCal punk scene. Participants received a copy of their chapter to review before publication to ensure that their story was told as they intended it. The women interviewed shared their memories without censorship by an interviewer's desire for a single narrative; they freely express their differing stances on whether or not they identify as feminists, experience discrimination on the scene, or—perhaps the most controversial topic—believe that punk still exists. Russo's commitment to preserving the experiences of her interviewees is commendable.

Every surviving male rockstar writes a tell-all memoir or, more accurately, or often pays to have one ghostwritten. I confess that a voyeuristic fascination in the lives behind the music has led me to read more than my fair share of such accounts. Those celebrities recount depraved tales from the glory days, yet at some point start to blend together. By including perspectives from a demographic usually excluded from these memoirs, this book had stories that felt fresh: getting pregnant backstage at the Whisky, selling grave sites over the phone to avoid sexual harassment at an in-person job, and punching out handsy strangers at shows.

Though many felt empowered by punk, most of the women interviewed discuss the scene's darker elements, including being groped in mosh pits and raped by people they believed were friends. DD Wood (neé Grisham), musician, writer, and teacher, writes: "I saw so many girls who were used and spit out, and I hate that about the punk scene of that time. For years, I was very loyal to many of those men, but at the same time, the stories I've heard and the stories women have told me since really upset me. I have created more and more distance from many of the people in the scene, both men and women, who still look back at that time period with great affection and, in my opinion, blinders as to how much harm was done and how many people we inevitably lost."A great irony of punk is that it espouses being an inclusive place for everyone, especially those treated poorly by the mainstream, yet it retains much of the oppressive, hierarchical structure it denounces. The very title of the book implies a loss of momentum: we *were* going to change the world.

The importance of these stories runs deeper than recovering forgotten voices of a past scene. The power of media to influence future musicians is clear from the first chapter, in which the legendary Alice Bag reflects on learning about punk from a magazine she picked up at a liquor store while on a high school lunch break. By reading this book and exploring similar projects, young women learning about punk today can more easily envision a place for themselves on modern and future scenes.

—Caitlin Xavier



Friday Night Light:
The Novelization of the Album by
Perverts Again
Alex Ward
Make Them Wonder Why
Publishing, 2017
161 pages

This book's mere existence is absurd: it's a novelization by Alex Ward of the new album by his band, Perverts Again. The LP isn't a concept album, so there's no plot to lend to a novel; rather, the songs' lyrics serve as a loose inspiration for the events of the book, often making their way into dialogue or description. It's an absolutely bonkers way to write a book, the lyrics forcing the plot into improbable twists and turns—and things only get more hilariously convoluted when the author is forced to accommodate the lyrics to Billy Joel's "My Life," since the band covers it on the album.

It's only logical, then, that the novel's plot is equally absurd as the circumstances of its conception. The unnamed narrator, who describes himself early on as "not lovable, but...smart and 'benign,'" winds his way through a series of increasingly surreal and violent episodes on his way to...well, the end goal keeps changing. But whether he's trying to rent a video from Blockbuster, defeat the dreaded "Teen Warden" Longlegger, or, ultimately, rescue his malevolent little brother, Little Brother, from the horrors of being sent to college prematurely, things never quite seem to go the narrator's way. The quest for the VHS, for example, is initially derailed when the clerk refuses to rent to our hero until he returns with a more stylish outfit, and things spin out from there, making everything exponentially more complicated.

It's easy to place *Friday NIght Light* within the context of contemporary fiction; George Saunders is an easy comparison, but it's an apt one. But the novel never feels derivative, and when it is strained, it's only because of the way it's forced to accommodate Perverts Again lyrics—and that apparent strain is typically played for laughs. Ward's prose is engaging and almost shockingly readable, seemingly in spite of itself, and that's entirely a credit to his voice. With a self-assuredness that belies his lack of experience, the author somehow manages to make eight chapters of Perverts Again-inspired episodes feel cohesive, and his characters feel, if not real (they are entirely and intentionally *surreal*), then rounded and thoroughly thought out.

It's not a perfect book, by any means. As the novel approaches its end, Ward seems to be in a hurry to wrap things up; while the first chapter, "Blockbusted," stretches past the 40-page mark, the final chapter, "Cereal Bowl," falls short of a page and a half. But if my biggest problem with a self-published, 160-page novelization of a punk record is that it *ends too quickly*, well, that speaks volumes.

Ultimately, the book is just really fucking funny, and that's what makes it such a pleasure to read. "Does that make sense?" the narrator asks us at one point. "If not, re-read the confusing sentence prior to 'Does that make sense?' until it is understood." It still doesn't make sense, of course; none of this book *makes sense*, including its very existence. But I'm glad it does exist.

—Miranda Fisher

CHRIS
KRAUS
AFTER
KATHY
ACKER

After Kathy Acker:
A Literary Biography
By Chris Kraus
Semiotext(e), 2017
352 pgs | $24.95

In the world of contemporary myths, Kathy Acker is an up-from-the-boot-straps, punk-as-fuck literary goddess. Indeed, she did break boundaries with her work as an experimental writer, and cultivated a fiercely defiant and highly stylized persona. Acker never played the good girl—not to her family, not to the establishment literary world, not to anyone really, and this became her calling card. However, the reality of Kathy Acker's life was, not surprisingly, more average and more privileged than she sometimes let on, and any serious biography about her has to grapple with the now mythic aura of Kathy Acker vs. reality. In *After Kathy Acker* by Chris Kraus, this dichotomy between Acker's well-crafted public persona and the basic facts of her life is a large part of Kraus's analysis, as she pulls back the curtain on one of the most intriguing literary figures of the twentieth century.

From the first page of the book, Kraus makes it clear that she was personally acquainted with Acker on some level as she recounts what it was like to go to Acker's memorial, and later, the scattering of her ashes at Fort Funston in San Francisco after her death from cancer in 1997. Although the nature of their relationship is never understood from the book, most likely they were acquaintances in a large circle of artists and writers in the Bay Area, New York, and beyond. Whatever their relationship may have been, the personal connection adds a dose of authenticity to the book; however, it does not appear to have swayed Kraus towards presenting an overly flattering portrait of Acker. Kraus presents the voices of many of Acker's critics—old friends, lovers, and colleagues—along with many whom express affection (sometimes those same critics) for what Acker stood for and her remarkable dedication to her craft and what she was able to achieve.

The book is framed chronologically from 1971 onwards, although it moves back and forth through time to make key points and connections, including details of Acker's elite prep school days in New York City. There, she stood out from her peers as highly intellectual, and also as a "slut," and therefore already an outsider. The year 1971 was a pivotal one for Acker. Just back in New York with her first husband after a period of living in San Diego, Acker was broke, suffering from Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, and, most importantly, absolutely committed to her writing. Not being cut out for "straight" jobs, Acker began a brief foray into sex work with her husband. They were featured in porn loops and worked in a live sex show at Fun City in Times Square after answering an ad in the Village Voice. This would prove to be a highly instructive time for Acker's future writing. Krauss writes: "Throughout her career in book after book, Acker would describe the cyclic despair of doing sex work to buy medicine so she could keep on doing sex work crafting these months of her life into something more allegorical than her actual life on West 163rd Street." While the sex work didn't last long and Acker was conflicted over doing it at all, this period in her life would become a recurring theme in her work, acting as a kind of proof of what kind of person she was and the kind of life she had lived—on the edge, of course.

For those familiar with Acker's persona but not necessarily her sometimes impenetrable work, Kraus offers a deeper understanding into the origins of Acker's style and the philosophy behind it, as well as her discipline as a writer. Not interested in traditional narrative, but struggling to narrow down exactly which direction to go in with her writing, Acker found her epiphany moment while working with mentor, David Antin, at UC San Diego in the early 1970s. His call for appropriating other texts fit into perfectly with Acker's desire to fuck things up. Appropriation would become Acker's most defining style, as she reinvented several classic and mainstream texts. In 1983, Acker signed a deal with Grove and released her first novel on a major press, *Great Expectations,* with several more to follow in the coming years, including the brilliantly titled *Blood and Guts in High School*. This period in her career was the culmination of many years of struggle to find wider recognition. At Grove, she found an editor who revered her as an artist, and who expected her work to be "difficult," and therefore never attempted to change anything. Kraus writes: "Her work was steeped in Grove's avant-garde lineage, but at the same time it reflected the abrasive Lower East Side early-'80s zeitgeist." During the 1980s, her writing held many critics' attention as something new, fresh, and bold; later they would dismiss her recurring fascination with themes of lives lived on the margins as played out and dated.

Kraus shows that in many cases Acker actively sought to create an image of herself that was more hard-scrabble, more on the edge, harder, tougher, and rougher than it actually was; however, it never dissuades us from the truth that life for Acker was difficult: not exactly as she portrayed it, but difficult still. She didn't conform to her family's standards, she was an openly sexual being in a world that values repression, and she actively created work that was not made for mass consumption. Acker's work was made for readers who understood that the world is totally fucked and wanted to commiserate over it.

—Kevin Darling

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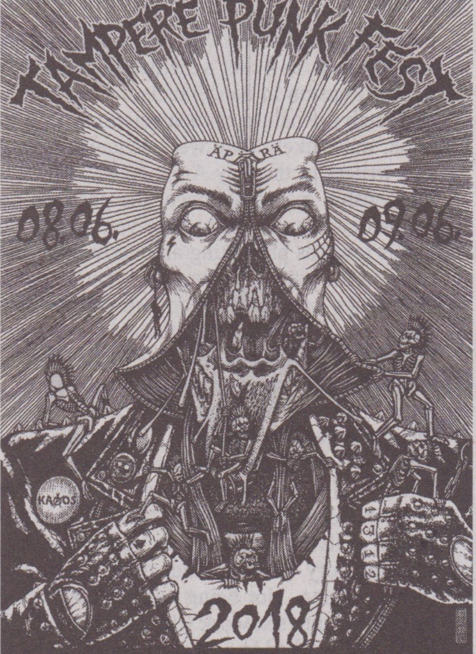

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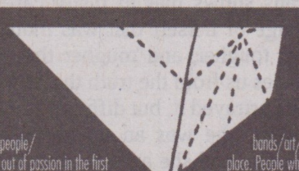

We like to meet people/bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

"NEVER MIND WHAT THEY'RE SELLING- IT'S WHAT YOU ARE BUYING"

RECORDS

For review and radio play consideration, send two copies of vinyl or one copy of CD-only releases to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146, USA. We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore, etc.—no major labels or labels exclusively distributed by major-owned distros. Releases without vocals or drums will not be considered. Please include contact information and let us know where your band is from! No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork. All records reviewed are added to our archive, the largest collection of punk records in the world.

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(MM) Marissa Magic
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(P$) Paul Argent
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(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
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(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(WN) Robert Collins

ABSOLUT / SVAVELDIOXID – split LP

An absolute powerhouse of a split between Canada's ABSOLUT and Sweden's SVAVELDIOXID! The differences between each band's rough'n'tumble approach to D-beat and metalpunk is displayed in full force here. ABSOLUT's side is leant a hellish atmosphere similar to that of DEVIL MASTER or EEL by the echoed vocals and by the absolute killer leads. Especially interesting is the moody tension present in the more clean break during "Heart of Hatred" which displays a side of D-beat that many bands simply do not consider. On the other hand, SVAVELDIOXID has an almost HM-2 level of distortion, which lends itself to a more straightforward, yet more pummeling, sound than their split-mates. Their style is much more traditional D-beat, yet everything on their half is extremely menacing, due to the aforementioned guitar tone and the fucking *brutal* vocal stylings of lead singer Jocke. A killer split that D-beat devotees will want. (JD)
(Konton Crasher / Phobia)

ABUSEMENTS – "Cheated" EP

Apparently there are still punx in Alabama! I guess you gotta do something living in Montgomery. Musically, this sounds like the Warped Tour, heavy anthemic punk, kinda makes me think of BAD RELIGION with political punk lyrics. The B-side, "Sex Cult," rips. You definitely do not want to miss their website for YouTube videos of their songs. (GB)
(Permanent Lifetime)

ANGRY BRIGADE – "Soldiers" EP

Taking their name from a UK anarchist organization formed in the '70s, ANGRY BRIGADE from Prague plays political hardcore punk. Alternating between melodic, grizzly powerviolence vocals, and gang vocals, the band changes up their delivery on each track. The message is angry anarcho-punk, the speed is US thrash, and delivery is European crust. A lot of great ingredients made this EP while retaining its own individualistic flavor. Also, they want you to know C.R.C.A.B. (JR)
(Emergency / Phobia)

AQUARIUM – LP

Been obsessing over this group since I was informed of their existence. Wild libratory punk that is reminiscent of ye olde Southern California sound in a similar mindset to PATSY but with a different lens. A picture featuring both the EYES and the wilder, less herky / jerky parts of MINUTEMEN songs. The guitar sound is the coolest. I didn't notice that Sarah sings in German until listening to this record, which instantly makes me think BARCHEN UND DIE MILCHBUBIES / HANS A PLAST because I am a basic human with basic human responses and limited observational skills. But this really makes me think of propulsive wild realities, running in a drainage ditch, listening to the KLEENEX 45, sticking your head out a car window like a dog more than a neat pile of influences typed out by a trite and tired reviewer. Wild! Wild! Wild! (LG)
(Lumpy)

ARTIFICIAL DISSEMINATION – "Past. Present. Future." CD

Here is some punk with a capital P! This Canadian duo does it old school like DOA meets the RAMONES, with a little Oi! thrown in every now and then. Here is their complete discography, including a live radio performance and six short interviews. This band is not the worst, but their sound is played out and dated, and the interviews are painful to sit through. A 7" single of these guys might be OK, but this release is probably for super fans only. (BA)
(Seminal)

BABYLON – "Back to the Brink" EP

By the books D-beat crust out of Seattle. It's like VARUKERS meets DOOM and forgets who's who. They've got the standard driving riffs, the gruff / shouted trade off vocals, and the nods to MOTÖRHEAD that are the hallmarks of this sound. Unfortunately, that's about all they've got. You probably already have a few copies of this record already. They're just labeled something else. (BA)
(self-released)

BEDFORD FALLS – "Send More Bees" LP

This South Wales indie pop group moves back and forth between the two genres they have mastered: music for white dudes with beards and music for white dudes who do not have beards. My initial reaction was that this was music for sitting down with friends, drinking whiskey, and talking about how fucked up the world is. It sits well in the background but doesn't intrude when it leaks in and takes front and center. It's actually pretty good, but it doesn't strike me as the kind of music you will ever want to listen to when you just want to listen to a record. It's the record

you put on when you're entertaining a mixed group as a nice touch to add some pleasant music to the background. The vocalist has a soothing, bedtime story voice and the music is shined up from years of practice, but the mold has remained very much intact after this one. (RH)
(Boss Tuneage / Brassneck / Dead Broke)

BETA BLOCKERS – "Stiff Prescription" LP
Don't be deceived, this is *not* mellow. Self-medication music that may appeal to fans of countrymen contemporaries such as the LOWEST FORM or ANXIETY. There's apparently a keyboard player in the band, but I can't tell which of the godawful noise on this record they may be responsible for, which is a great mark on my scorepad. Things are mostly uptempo, except for a couple songs that are slowed down enough to wiggle with or to savor the little things that keep me listening to this record. There is a lot to like: "Who" starts out with a synth pad that I'd like to imagine began as a botched cover of the *Chariots of Fire* theme; "Bruxism" features the inspired couplet "*rub me down a while / I move in sex styles,*" the lyrics throughout follow the sweat stains across high thread-count fabrics between locker room trade and peripheral extraction economies. That may be a reach, but while the lyrics are included on the insert, they are obscure and jumpy enough to choose your own adventure. I prefer to imagine them scrawled out between the headlines of discarded tabloids on the tube while sweating out a molly hangover. Sick tunes, get it. (EW)
(Static Shock)

BIG HEET – "On A Wire" LP
This album came out on cassette last year, but this is a limited edition lathe-cut version. And very nice it is, too! When I first pulled the record from the sleeve it was so heavy I thought they'd sprung for 180g vinyl, but instead it's some heavy duty mirror-effect plastic. Put it on your wall and tell people you went platinum. Anyway, on to the sounds—BIG HEET have absorbed and interpreted a range of influences and ideas from the likes of SUPERCHUNK, FIREHOSE, SQUIRREL BAIT, PITCHFORK, maybe even early REM, and many others, whittling the essence into diverse chunks of modernist indie-rock, wherein sprawling art-damaged collages give way to bursts of spit and snarl almost-hardcore. I understand the band is from Florida, and one can sense the heat and humidity in the desperation of their songs. (AM)
(Pocket Cat)

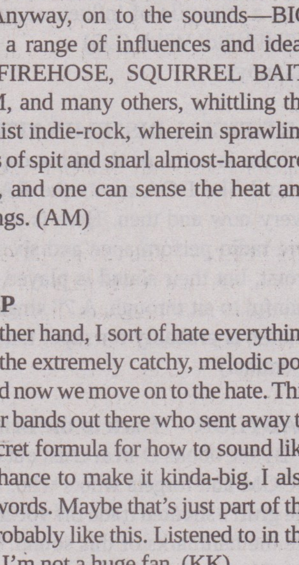
THE BOMBPOPS – "Dear Beer" EP
On the one hand, I love this. On the other hand, I sort of hate everything about it. Let's start with the love: I love the extremely catchy, melodic pop punk sound. I love the female vocals. And now we move on to the hate. This sounds exactly the same as a zillion other bands out there who sent away to the secret address to get the (not-so-)secret formula for how to sound like a punk band and still give yourself a chance to make it kinda-big. I also hate the gratuitous use of FCC-banned words. Maybe that's just part of the formula. Listened to in a vacuum, I'd probably like this. Listened to in the context of today's popular music scene, I'm not a huge fan. (KK)
(Fat Wreck)

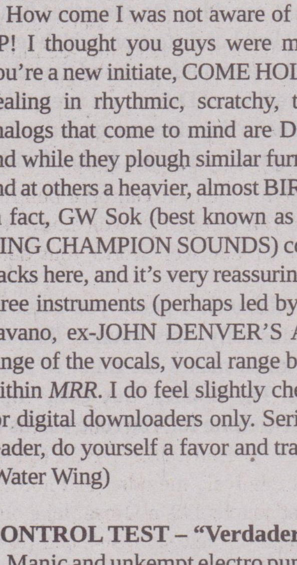
CCR HEADCLEANER – "Mission Control" EP
Squeezing four songs onto a 7" has forced these usually expansive purveyors of acid-eater grunge to explore the art of brevity. The results are still devastatingly raw and unhinged, not least on the sub-two minute "Lobotomize The Cops," as harsh, demented, and focused as any hardcore record reviewed in these pages this month. (AM)
(Pollen Season)

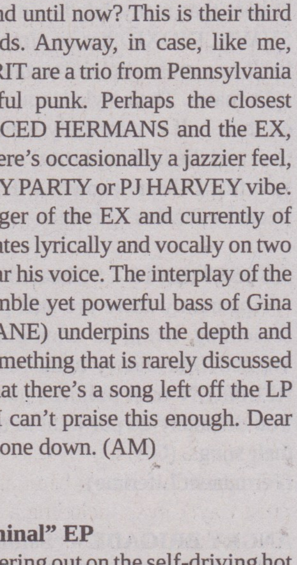
THE CHILD MOLESTERS – "1978 Hound Dog Recordings" 12"
For the uninitiated (and at the risk of stating the painfully obvious), the Child Molesters specialized in geared-to-offend, hyper-drugged punk rock, the kind you were warned about, the kind you're terrified of, the kind that ruins lives on contact. It happened to me! KBD collectors have long championed their works and fawned over their wares. Their attack, using Nazi dress-up and lock-up-your-daughters terror, somehow comes across as more absurd than that of any of their peers...It's all highly volatile and irreparably fucked. This 40th anniversary reissue drives all that home, collecting the band's infamous 1978 session: four songs only, all of 'em wrist-slit whoppers. "I'm So (Fucked Up)" is the premier West Coast druggie riot call, equal to the celebratory inebriated shards shat out by the likes of PAGANS or CHAIN GANG, so incredibly fucked and so impossibly perfect. "13 Is My Lucky Number" examines statutory rape with all the nuance of the knife-boner brazenly worn by one of the Molesters on the sleeve. The pulverizer couplet of "I'm Gonna Punch You (In The Face)" and "(I Wanna See Some) Wholesale Murder" have both comp'd far and wide for years now, not that their power has been diminished in the slightest. Harmful and legendary. (MC)
(Negative Jazz)

COME HOLY SPIRIT – "Asters and Disasters" LP
How come I was not aware of this band until now? This is their third LP! I thought you guys were my friends. Anyway, in case, like me, you're a new initiate, COME HOLY SPIRIT are a trio from Pennsylvania dealing in rhythmic, scratchy, thoughtful punk. Perhaps the closest analogs that come to mind are DOG FACED HERMANS and the EX, and while they plough similar furrows there's occasionally a jazzier feel, and at others a heavier, almost BIRTHDAY PARTY or PJ HARVEY vibe. In fact, GW Sok (best known as the singer of the EX and currently of KING CHAMPION SOUNDS) collaborates lyrically and vocally on two tracks here, and it's very reassuring to hear his voice. The interplay of the three instruments (perhaps led by the nimble yet powerful bass of Gina Favano, ex-JOHN DENVER'S AIRPLANE) underpins the depth and range of the vocals, vocal range being something that is rarely discussed within *MRR*. I do feel slightly cheated that there's a song left off the LP for digital downloaders only. Seriously, I can't praise this enough. Dear reader, do yourself a favor and track this one down. (AM)
(Water Wing)

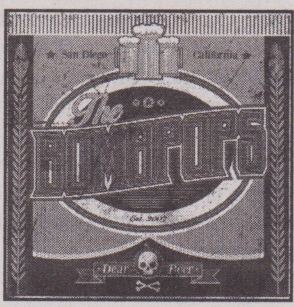
CONTROL TEST – "Verdadero Criminal" EP
Manic and unkempt electro punk sputtering out on the self-driving hot rod via Seattle, Washington. Clearly and justly reverential (referential

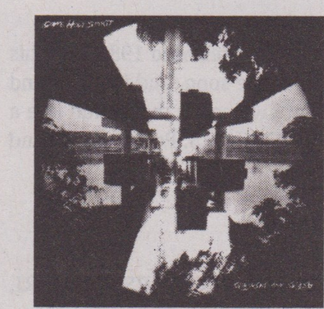


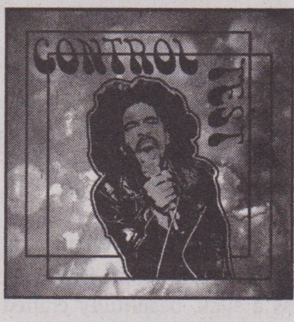




BIG HEET ◂ ON A WIRE







even?) to old lords such as the UNITS or the NORMAL, though the vocals (all in Spanish, the lovingly tie-dyed package doesn't include a sheet unfortunately) are on more of a howling bad trip desperation tip than any of the above. Four songs played fast on this record—blink and you miss it. A faithful capture of a bit of the live experience we all seek to live if not breathe, now enjoyable in the comfort of your own living room without any patch cables getting knocked out of place by errant cans of Rainier or push-pitting Amazon employees on the crawl in Capitol Hill. The only thing I can wish for in a record like this is more distortion and faster tempos or more sloppiness, but sometimes you can't ask that of a band that knows what it wants to sound like and how to do it. (EW)
(Iron Lung)

DESPAIR – "Visions of the Inferno" LP

Sadly posthumous, this is the last testament of a significantly above-average traditional D-beat punk band that had some interesting tricks in their playbook. The template is straight DISCHARGE worship, with Scandi-style vocals that recall early DISFEAR and some unique choices when it comes to tone. The bass is super-downtuned sounding and laden with effects, giving it a sloppy, visceral sound that contrasts well with the traditional, treble-heavy leads. The leads are definitely worth remarking on, as they're perfectly dialed in to the Bones style, without ever lifting any passages wholesale. That being said, there are definitely a couple of riffs that are suspiciously similar to ones previously wielded by a certain band from Stoke-on-Trent, but no real fan of the style is going to hold it against them. It can be a bummer to pick up a record from a band that you (probably) won't have the chance to see live, but this is a killer EP and well worth your hard-earned D-beat bucks. (AU)
(Brain Damage)

DISSOBER / HONNÖR SS – split EP

Split EP between two Swedish D-beat groups that play in the more traditional stylings. The 7"s don't distinguish who is on which side, so I am making a guess on who plays on which side. DISSOBER (on the side labeled with both band names) is relatively melodic (and not in a crust way!), even including a song that sounds like a D-beat take on a '50s rocker, which falls flat. But the rest of their side isn't bad (even if they do almost perfectly rip the chorus for "War Machine" for their first song). HONNÖR SS (the side with the Konton Krasher logo) has a typical crasher sound, complete with totally blown-out guitar noise, harsh vocals, and frantic drumming. Their side goes by in a blazing whirr, but methinks they may have saved their better songs for the flexi that is reviewed in this issue. (JD)
(Konton Krasher)

THE DWARVES – "Take Back The Night" LP

If you don't already know how you feel about the band that's been spewing incredibly catchy scum rock since the mid-'80s, please don't start here with this LP. Sure, it's still surprisingly high quality, well put together, poppy, hedonistic rock from aging scumbags who sing about fucking whatever they can, jerking off, fighting for no reason, drugs, discrediting queer and trans issues, or just being terrible fucking people, but they did it much better long ago. If you long for the days when punk meant white dudes should be able to say whatever they want without repercussions, because, you know, rock, or whatever bullshit answer you have, then by all means go find their 1999 and earlier output and question where you stand. Save for a few chuckles, and some sweet yet fucked up ballads, I have a hard time believing these songs presented here would have made it out of the practice space, much less on an LP without the DWARVES name. (DZ)
(Burger)

THE EX – "27 Passports" CD

One of the longest-running and most unique bands in punk, the Netherland's the EX have returned with another dynamic album that both breaks the mold and continues the same steady explorative path they have wandered for the past two decades. Long interested in the musical traditions of other people, over the years they've incorporated elements of Congolese, Ethiopian, and Eritrean music to their already eclectic post-punk palette. Some of those sounds and instruments, such as the *mbira*, make an appearance on *27 Passports*, their thirteenth studio album (not including any collaborative efforts). Fans of the band will not be unimpressed by the lengthy tunes found here, although this album, with its lengthy jamming, may not win over the hearts of punks with a more conservative ear. But fuck 'em, punk is a dynamic, changing force, and the EX has been proof of that for the majority of their existence. (JD)
(Ex)

FIFTEEN – "The Choice Of A New Generation" LP

You see, it's really hard for me to not be biased when it comes to these FIFTEEN reissues. It's my own shit, and I apologize. The singer Jeff's earlier band, CRIMPSHRINE is one of my favorite bands of all fucking time. Sure, this band has a helluva lot of what I loved...it's super gritty, messy (not sloppy) pop punk, and the singer sounds like a cross between *Popeye* the cartoon and Popeye as played by Robin Williams trying really hard to croon in the mirror with a hairbrush microphone. That part is fucking killer. The lyrics, though, are becoming a little more spiritual than I can feel comfortable raising my fist to, and they are also becoming a little sexual. Honestly, I'd be ok with that, too, if it weren't for Jeff's later admission of sexual assault during these years. This adds a new dimension that makes it a little uncomfortable for me to blare at the volume that I want, because to be honest, the first side of this record is still pretty fuckin' killer. Sure, there's some unforgivable funky jams, and by side B, I think I've fulfilled my listening requirements, but it's really fucking good to revisit this. If, for some reason, you are a pop punk type who enjoys grittier stuff with more punk and less pop, and you somehow aren't already familiar with this stuff, you should do yourself a favor and pick up their *Swain's First Bike Ride* LP, also recently reissued, which is much dirtier and has even more undeniable hits, or for fuck's sake, find a CRIMPSHRINE record and discover all of this in a linear fashion like you're supposed to. (DZ)
(Dead Broke)

FLACKOFF – "The Flackoff EP" EP

This record is so incredibly good. Originally released 1980, and this English band's only release. The A-side is one song, and it's long and drags. But the B-side is total destruction. Two songs that sound like a British mix of NASTY FACTS and the AVENGERS. Poppy, snotty and vicious. Infectious. Crucial! (FS)
(Inflammable Material / Sofa)

FLOWERS AND FIRE – "Fire / Disbelief"

This debut single from Vancouver, Canada's FLOWERS AND FIRE is a slick, beautifully crafted goth-punk gem. The lyrics, "*Fire fire, walk with me*" can't not be a Twin Peaks reference, which should be a selling point for some. Among hypnotic guitar leads and a tastefully complementary rhythm section, what makes this band stand apart is the hauntingly beautiful singing of vocalist Izzi Kearns. Everything comes together so smoothly that this could easily be an actual '80s darkwave release, like from when you had to actually convince some record company A&R guy that your band had talent. A must-hear for fans of SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES and the like. (HB)
(Inflammable Material)

FRACTURED – "Recognized by Failure" EP

Vicious L.A. powerviolence that sounds exactly like the black and white urban decay imagery splattered all over this and all other records like it. Super fast and youth crew-inspired except all the songs are about street level nihilism and being hooked on booze and drugs. You know, like GEHENNA minus the metal. If you're a fan of gutters, rock bottoms, and CROSSED OUT, then you'll love these guys. (BA)
(Deep Six)

FUCK! (IT'S PRONOUNCED SHIT!) – "It's Pronounced the First Three EPs" 12"

FUCK! is Fraser Murderburger's side project. The songs are pretty cool if you're into really catchy punk rock. It reminds me of bands like SCREECHING WEASEL, NOFX, TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET and the RIVERDALES with a shit ton of energy, awesome vocal harmonies, and a fast drummer. The vocalist is a really good singer and the songs are mostly about mental illness, some dumb jokes, and a good dose of what seems to me like self-hatred. If you're into pop punk, this album is like a burst of raw energy. (DB)
(Brassneck)

FUCKED AND BOUND – "Suffrage" LP

I saw this band's name and expected some kind of ANAL CUNT-loving noise grind fucks. Fortunately, this is not the case this time. Instead, this is well-assembled, female-fronted crusty hardcore out of Seattle. These driving D-beat rippers are nuanced enough to sound fresh, a rare feat in D-beat! Not to mention the howling vocals are top notch. Jaded old crust farts take note, this one's worth a spin. (BA)
(Atomic Action / Void Assault)

THE FUCK OUTS – "Rat Life" CD

This Australian band (I think) gives us eight solid tunes of heavy-handed hardcore that varies from *Pick Your King* to *Age Of Quarrel* jams all with some bitchin' guitar solos. It's heavy, thrashing and rocking all at the same time while not being fiercely original or hugely memorable. The CD starts with a nice little crystal meth news report sound byte and I'm not sure if they're for or against but this would make a fine soundtrack for a high speed jaunt through the outback while smoking shards. Check it out.
(Inner City Uprising)

FUTURA – "Spit On The Flag" EP

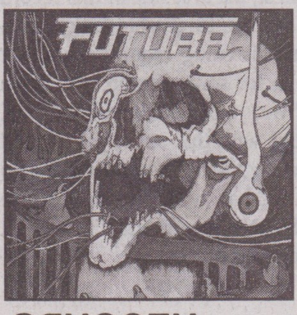
This is just flat-out amazing. After last year's blow-your-ears-off demo that made a couple top tens of the wiser ones here at the magazine, FUTURA gives us their vinyl debut and shows us how it's done. This features former members of FUMIGADOS, but this band is whole nuther beast. The guitars slay with total DISCHARGE / ANTI CIMEX metallic fury, the bass thuds your feeble brain into submission, the drums just crush, and Erika's vocals are definitely straight from down under—and I don't mean Australia. Like SS-20, the BAGS, SHITLICKERS, the NURSE, BROKEN BONES all thrown together and sounding nothing like any of those bands. "Spit On the Flag" is pure righteous venomous thrash, and every song that follows just gets better until "Explode" does just what the title suggests. Killer bloody skull, flames, and dripping eyeball in hell artwork, complete with 3D glasses. Cheers to En Tu Kara Records for the great work. Don't be a chump, buy it punk. (RO)
(En Tu Kara)

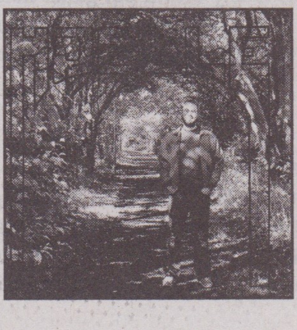
GELD – "Perfect Texture" LP

Metallic hardcore from Geelong, Victoria (also known as "Gastown" or "Waco 2"). Somewhere in the same sonic battle royale as IMPALERS or ABSOLUT, maybe with an extra dash of the first TESTAMENT LP (especially on the last track, where a band can really get away with pushing past the 90-second mark). Heavy hell dimension electronic treatments throughout: the A-side wraps up with a *Goldeneye* OST quality instrumental jam whipping into "Scando Ripper"—an appropriately titled D-beat thrasher if there ever was one. Other hits include "Dog Tired" and "It's a Con," a couple other ruminations on themes such as hopeless alienation, hopeless anxiety, and hopelessness. Have we at last tracked down the record that was on those CDs that one cenobite threw around to slice peoples' heads off in *Hellraiser III*?
(Iron Lung)

GINO AND THE GOONS – "Rip It Up" LP

Feels like an awful long time since this lot's debut appeared outta the blue at *MRR* HQ. Had the pleasure of dishin' that one back then...and it sounds like not a goddamn thang has changed! All-party rock'n'roll, merging classic Fonzie grease with the spirit of '90s Budget Rock, sounding wild and raw enough to transform any taproom into a stag party. The Goons pretty much have a monopoly on this kinda sound / vibe in 2018, which is fine because I'm not sure I could stand wading

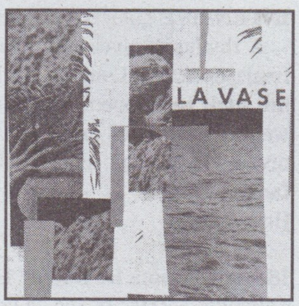




HOLY HANDS
NEW MAGNETIC

INTENSIVE CARE
EVERYTHING HAS ITS PRICE

KRONISK MISANTROPI



in this pool (again!) these days. But for Gino and crew: let 'em rock and let 'em rip, I say! (MC)
(SunWray)

GREAT PLAINS – "Born in a Barn" LP

GREAT PLAINS are, to me, one of the most underrated bands of the '80s. Although it would be fair enough to characterize the group's music as quirky, keyboard-driven garage pop, such simple descriptors fail to capture the band's wit and charm. A great deal of that is due to Ron House (THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS, COUNTER INTUITS) and his singular love-it-or-hate it voice and smartass lyrics. But there's a magic to the music itself as well, a looseness to the whole affair that belies how well all the components works together. While I hold firm in my stance that the band's magnum opus was its second LP, *Naked at the Buy, Sell, and Trade,* this album—their first—ain't no slouch either. It's at turns beautiful ("I Must Have Made It All Up" is a knockout of a song) and genius in its specificity (*"One of these days I'm Rutherford B. Hayes"* sings House in the track named for the controversial former president), and it's all entirely worthy of your time. (MF)
(Rerun)

GREAT PLAINS – "The Mark, Don, & Mel EP +4" LP

Reissue of the stellar 1983 EP from Columbus, OH's GREAT PLAINS. Clever, quirky, indie garage pop that in the '80s we'd simply call college rock. The music is well-played, interesting, and funny. Singer Ron House's vocals are delivered dryly and seriously while singing lyrics that will crack you up. His style just makes me happy. This is their first release, so the band's songs would just keep getting better. Luckily, ReRun has also reissued their first LP *Born In A Barn*. Get them both. The four bonus tracks on this LP are from a performance the band did on cable access television also in 1983, and are of good quality too. This is simply excellent. (CK)
(ReRun)

HANGMEN ALSO DIE – LP

Harsh screams and washed-over riffs screech ahead, delivering gruesome streetpunk with dabs into a filthy crust petri dish. Sort of out of key and driveling, sort of diabolical with glimmers of the sounds of a more troglodyte version of DEFIANCE, MISERY, or POPULATION ZERO. The two people in HANGMEN ALSO DIE are on drums, guitar, a low-end guitar, and a shit load of drunken screaming. There are some bizarre trippy metal interludes channel early '90s power metal, or I'd say even early '90s video game soundtrack metal(?) with crusty screaming! Wake up Portland! You're not as weird as this. (JR)
(self-released)

THE HIPSHAKES – "Shot / Samba"

I just love the HIPSHAKES. They are from England and play catchy garage rock. This 45 has two songs of rollicking, banging rock'n'roll. It's straightforward without any of that unnecessary 21st century garage rock jangly fluff, which is much appreciated. Cool stuff. (CK)
(Nerve Centre)

HJELLE – "Fan Ta NPM" LP

Here's a solo album from the singer of BÄDDAT FOR TRUBBEL. As you might expect, this chap knows his way around a song, so this is as catchy as all get-out. The record opens with an acoustic folk ballad before getting to the meat and potatoes, then closing with another ballad. A Swedish meatball sandwich, if you will. Deceptively complex, simple-sounding pop punk with hooks galore and rousing vocals that predominantly remind me of the anthemic folk-pop-punk of Argentina's FUN PEOPLE / BOOM BOOM KID but also the "new oldies" sound of, say, NOBUNNY. All these songs are in Swedish, but before long you'll be singing along. Seems to be difficult to track down—hopefully someone will import this or give it a domestic release. (AM)
(Jared Sin)

HOLY HANDS – "NEW MAGNETIC" LP

This is well-recorded emo. Mid-to-slow tempo and sincere vocals with driving, broken down guitars. It didn't really capture me musically, but these guys are definitely good at what they do. Kind of reminds me of ALKALINE TRIO, HOT WATER MUSIC, or newer AFI. Side B starts with the song "Love is Love," which is pretty catchy. The lyrics are pretty good, though. (DB)
(Atomic Action)

HONNÖR SS – "Bortom All Rädning" flexi

Nasty Swedish D-beat crust with all the appropriate reverb on the vocals and effects pedals galore. Solid songwriting throughout, with some cool dramatic breaks and catchy choruses. The cancer-throated vocals are definitely a highlight, as is the more creative than usual bass playing. The lead bass on "Rutten Minister" is excellent, giving the song a bit of a CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE (US) feel. Three songs that fly by and leave you wanting more. Bonus points to the label for producing a proper old-school round flexi-disc instead of the lazy-ass square bullshit everyone's been dishing out lately. (AU)
(Phobia)

INDONESIAN JUNK – "Stars in the Night" CD

INDONESIAN JUNK is the current project from Daniel James, guitarist of pop punk heroes CHINESE TELEPHONES. (I guess it's important to note that I've known Dan for a long time, like an *our dads were friends when they were in middle school* long time, but this review is written sans friend filter.) INDONESIAN JUNK plays a catchy hard rock / tough power pop style that I think plays well to Dan's strengths. He has a real knack for strong hooks and is a phenomenal guitarist. My only issue here is the vocals, which frequently sound slurred or strained. For the more rocking songs, I think that can work: the vocals on "I'll Run Away," for example, give the track the feel of a more shambolic THIN LIZZY. But the vocals can also prevent purer pop songs, like "I Would Never Treat You Like That," from reaching their fullest potential. It's not a dealbreaker for me personally, but your mileage may vary. (MF)
(Rum Bar)

INTENSIVE CARE – "Everything Has Its Price" EP

A rhythmic psychedelic hardcore nightmare brought to us by the freaks up at Iron Lung. Everything about this is a total mind fuck, from the stark yet tripped-out cover art to the ten ton distorted noise and weirdo electronics that creep along to the beat. If you're looking to dive into a psychic sludge hellhole and never come out, then look no further. (BA)
(Iron Lung)

ISS – "I Wanna Be Dated" EP

Punk's answer to the POSTAL SERVICE? Despite living in two different towns and working mostly at a distance...not at all! Primarily using a sampler to compose their punk manifestos (a move inspired by rap according to their interview in *MRR* #418), ISS are back with four new jams to keep you happy all year long. Not unlike their debut LP *(Endless Pussyfooting)* each of the songs remains within the punk paradigm while still being playful in form and structure. That playfulness is also present in the lyrics, revealing a sly, snide wit in lines like "*Metalcore survivor playing Nazi synthesizer, / tongue on Dougie's boot / a flavor for the weak*" and "*I can only judge a man by the dangle of his earring.*" In short, get this and boogie. (JD)
(Sorry State)

JUSTINE AND THE UNCLEAN – "Get Unclean" CD

This is straddling the line between classic rock'n'roll and modern country. The songs are sincere and twangy—heartfelt love songs about broken hearts and unrequited love. Singer Justine has a distinct voice and interesting lyrics, while the music is aggressive and well-played if a bit too slick. It's enjoyable. (CK)
(Rum Bar)

KRONISK MISANTROPI – "Helvetet Väntar" EP

Brightly produced yet plodding D-beat hardcore from Sweden. Tons of reverb on the snarling dual vocals, heavy drums, and buzzing low-end guitars. Most of the songs are mid-tempo with dive-bombing guitar solos. The track named after the band, which sounds like TURBONEGRO meets WOLFPACK, is easily the strongest. Blasphemous cut-and-paste style cover art including a Parental Advisory label and the "crying" emoji, which I'm hoping was meant to be facetious. There is no hope. (JR)
(Konton Crasher)

THE K7's – "Take 1" CD

To be honest, I've had terrible luck finding common ground with the stuff I get from this label, and this is no exception. Incredibly overproduced, almost radio-friendly pop punk. Styles range wildly from RAMONES worship to Epitaph chugga-chuggas and whoa-oh-ohs. You've seen and heard this a thousand times. (DZ)
(Rum Bar)

LA VASE – LP

Garage punk group from Leipzig, competent but not particularly hooky or wild. Everything really sounds like it's in its right place, which is not generally how I like this dish served. The best song here ("Quitter") is, naturally, the fastest one, where the wheels come closest to falling off this Sprinter. A couple songs are intricate enough to reward a band this tight—trading off a couple jerky rhythms and jangling out some incidental tones before pick-sliding back to whatever riff the song first kicked off with—not much of it is catchy enough to stick around long after listening. I could perhaps back a 7" of the last three songs, however. (EW)
(Phantom)

LAWRENCE ARMS – "We Are The Champions of the World (A Retrospective)" LP

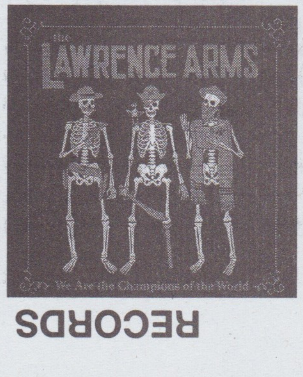
Double LP, greatest hits compilation. These guys pulled off the pop punk hat-trick, having put out records on Fat Records, Epitaph and Asian Man. If you looked up "Heartfelt Midwestern Pop Punk" in the dictionary, you'd see a picture of these guys. And if you're someone who likes non-political pop punk, chances are you already know and like these guys. Because they do what they do very well, and they've been doing it a long time. It's like if you mixed equal parts DILLINGER FOUR and WEAKERTHANS. Catchy and fast Pop with a healthy dose of Emo. And in addition to all their "hits," this record includes five never-before-released songs. If you're a pop punk loving motherfucker and want to check these guys out, this album is the place to start. (FS)
(Fat Wreck)

LEATHER JACUZZI – "The Whole Hog" LP

This LP is a collection of two previously released tapes by this Canadian punk band. Very cool stuff. Musically a total throwback to early '80s classic punk. Perhaps ANGRY SAMOANS would be the easiest point of reference. But they're a little more fuzzed out and garagey in a NEW BOMB TURKS kind of way. On the tracks from the first tape, the vocals are delivered with plenty of attitude, but with a deadpan quality to it. The second tape changes that. The vocals get much more manic and animated. Almost to NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS territory (which fit the songs perfectly). Very intense. Excellent. (FS)
(Danger)

LITHICS – "Mating Surfaces" LP

As frequently stated by this meager human, true happiness is existing in the same era as LITHICS. Watching them play is like solving a jigsaw puzzle with a missing piece. A truly dynamic group that transmits the most powerful nervous energy, summoning the magical reality of post-punk girl art fervor with additional SU TISSUE and *No New York* and D. Boon guitars all refracted into a distinct and urgent sound. Like something unraveling, someone picking up a part then walking away... But there's a totality that makes it so compelling to listen to! How much art can you take?! It's not a problem. An inside-out suit made by a talented tailor. Simultaneously confident and like witnessing an act of trepidation, the "how does this thing work / what happens if I do this" school of music colliding with a total and true vision of what is possible. Reading the lyrics to "Cheryl" makes me wish I was watching the movie, maybe with Sissy Spacek and Shelley Duvall. (LG)
(Kill Rock Stars)


the LAWRENCE ARMS
We Are the Champions of the World

Leather Jacuzzi
The Whole Hog

THE Minneapolis Zionism Club Band
LIVE! at
ARCI TAUN!
BUT WHO MADE THE MAN?
THE CHICKEN MADE THE EGG

Nadsat Ultrasurf

NARCOLEPTICS
2018 EP

Nerve Nerve Nerve
NEW ESSENTIALS
BEATS
NEW ESSENTIALS

THE MINNEAPOLIS URANIUM CLUB – "LIVE! at Arci Taun" LP
...In which these devolved specimens from the solar system Minneapolis torment the steel wires of their guitars before the unsuspecting citizens of an Italian village. Live albums can be hit or miss: the band's delivery and performance are on-point and energetic (more desperate and muscular than on record), and they put on one hell of a show. I'm sure the audience were blown away. However, although some of the live arrangements differ, there's a surfeit of new songs on here, and when I want to listen to tracks like "Who Made The Man?" or "That Clown's Got A Gun" I'm probably going to reach for the non-live version. As always the artwork and packaging are on point. Fans and completists will not be disappointed, but new initiates should start with *All Of Them Naturals* or *Human Exploration*. Of course, physical live exposure is mandatory. (AM)
(Castle Face)

MOPE GROOVES – "Vanished" LP
Quirky, weirdo pop with a bedroom recording, lo-fi feel might best describe what is a bit of a departure from MOPE GROOVES' previous jangle-pop output. Not that this doesn't have jangle or pop, but this record brings in a lot more influences. It feels less thought out, more haphazard, more odd notes, more odd sounds, more varied tempos, almost like they accidentally put together a record that just happens to work really well. Depending on where you put the needle down, you might get the VELVET UNDERGROUND or a late '80s Flying Nun band or the RAINCOATS or a single on Sarah Records. The fact that this record sounds so effortlessly well done might be part of the beauty of the whole thing. Sidenote: buy the vinyl, it has one of the best looking covers I've seen in years. (PA)
(See My Friends)

THE MOVEMENT – "Fools Like You" CD
This is, so far as I can tell, a reissue of this Danish trio's LP, with four bonus tracks to boot. Very little info on this, but they do play a pleasing brand of explicitly political (Marxist) rock, in the vein of REDSKINS (minus the horns), later period JAM, or SECRET AFFAIR. Definitely more mod than the likes of the late GENERAL STRIKE, complete with the skinny suits and Rickenbackers. "We Got Love. We Got Hope. We Got Marx." the disc proclaims. And the advertising also claims a new forthcoming effort too, which I'm quite looking forward to. (RK)
(Concrete Jungle)

THE MOVEMENT – "Move!" CD
This is a re-release of this mod band from Denmark's first LP. Four bonus tracks added on. I like this as they dish out energetic punky mod with politics on the left. Along the lines of early JAM, as they mix it up with some ska as well. Good stuff. (RL)
(Concrete Jungle)

MR. T EXPERIENCE – "King Dork Approximately, The Album" LP
If you've ever listened to '80s–'90s pop punk or even heard of Lookout! Records, you're more than likely familiar with the MR. T EXPERIENCE and what they do. This is more of that, just well crafted, inoffensive pop punk from people who have been doing it for over three decades. If you're looking to add more of that to your collection, step right up! "Down With The Universe" is a good sampling to start with, despite it closing out the album. Additionally, what makes this particularly fun and different is that it is the soundtrack to Dr. Frank's third book, which shares the name of the album. The book also comes with a download of the album, so if you like reading words in addition to hearing them, you can go that route too! This has it all: punk rock, teenage angst, high school, more teenage angst... (RH)
(Sounds Rad)

MUECO – "Mindless Instinct" LP
This was recorded in 2015 and is just seeing the light of day now. A solid record, crasher-influenced D-beat from Montreal, with charming two-finger, two-note leads, properly pissed vocals and rock-solid drumming that would make Bambi proud. The record does suffer from a lack of diversity, as all the songs are structured similarly and played at the same tempo, which lessens the overall effect. With one or two tracks that bent or broke the mold this would be a much better record. With some judicious editing this could've been a killer 7" EP. (AU)
(Konton Crasher)

MYCIAA – "De La Violence Ordinaire" LP
Upbeat, infectious, electro-dance-punk with a go-all-night energy from Limoges, France. Screamed group vocals in French and English over hardcore breakdown interludes add to the power of their material, while simple, catchy synth leads keep the sound focused, and unrelenting dance beats make you feel like you just ate some stimulants. Not to be confused with the lo-fi inhabitants of the synth-punk arena, MYCIAA's songwriting sensibilities are completely solid, and the songs could stand alone as pop songs if the punk breaks and vocals were cut out. Refreshingly sincere and heartfelt political vocals add a sense of the possibility of collective redemption if we just put up a good enough fight. A little like a synth-pop version of YAPHET KOTTO, it would have been flying off the shelves in the early '00s, before we were totally sure the world was ending. Hopefully there's still enough frenetic optimism in punk to keep the party going for a little while longer, 'cause this record deserves a few good spins. (HB)
(Fujimi Industry / Guerilla / Hello Sweet Noise / Malarie / No Pasaran / Teenage Hate / Les Ténèbres)

NADSAT / ULTRASURF – split EP
Both bands do two songs of driving, melodic, reverby guitar punk in the MASSHYSTERI vein. NADSAT is a little more on the thin sounding side of things, with a real plucky bass that musically gives it a slight BUZZCOCKS feel or even the GO-GO'S at super speed. ULTRASURF, while similar, sounds a lot more full and at least a little more driving. The vocals are more in the forced singing / yelling realm, with the guitars and drums sounding thicker in an altogether NEON PISS sort of way. Vocals in Spanish for both bands. (PA)
(Andalucia Uber Alles / Colilla / DIT / Hold Your Ground / In My Heart

Empire / Malditos Vinilos / Muerte a Tipo / Not Profit / Producciones Tudancas / Safety Pin Generation / Tabano / Tormenta de Ideas / YFLA)

NARCOLEPTICS – "2018" EP

I endorse a terrifying noise punk comeback, especially since the genre got so played out a few years ago that only the cream of the crop will be allowed to rise in the second coming. NARCOLEPTICS are the cream. Faster, louder, more furious, more relentless, with a distortion that comes from intensity and not from calculation. This guy says: "This record is fuckin' badass." Check the beginning of "Landlord Scumbag" and I dare you to tell me I'm wrong. (WN)
(Warthog Speak)

NEGATIV NULL – "Kategorisch Aggressiv" LP

This German band delivers some absolutely crushing grinding powerviolence. Their particular brand of blast-beat devastation falls somewhere between NO COMMENT and REPULSION, with maddening, sharp changes and driving grind influence. These guys shred from the get go and hardly leave room for even a breath. With 24 songs on a 45 RPM one-sided LP there's no time to fuck around. I've said it before and I'll say it again, powerviolence for fucking ever! (BA)
(Regurgitated Semen)

NERVE BEATS – LP

Sounds like '79 Aussie punk to these ears, and these ears like what they hears. Disjointed and feisty raw garage punk with plenty of art school weirdness with more than one moment that made me think of THOUGHT CRIMINALS...and late '80s SST. Which is a weird combination, I know, but we should all be allowed to be ourselves. NERVE BEATS excel at it. (WN)
(Fine Concepts)

NEWS – "Dirty Lies" 2xEP

What could be better than a NEWS "Dirty Lies" 7"? Well, that would be a NEWS "Dirty Lies" 7" with two unreleased 1978 bonus tracks, of course! NEWS were a legendary Australian '70s punk outfit from Melbourne that started life out as BABEEZ, whose lone EP is a monster and sported a notorious fetus sleeve. Apparently soon after the band decided to get serious, remaking themselves as a pop punk force to be reckoned with. This EP catches NEWS right in transition, combining their classic pop punk "Dirty Lies / Chop Chop Chop" single with two demo / live tracks from 1978. It's too bad we have to wait until the end of the EP to catch the best track, a live and rough take of the unheard '70s punker "Mainline Honey" that stands up next to the BABEEZ material. This is a second pressing on orange vinyl numbered out of 200 copies with tons of bonus inserts. (GB)
(Buttercup Records)

NO/BREAKS / ROTOKILLER – split EP

This is a split by two badass Michigan hardcore bands. NO/BREAKS side starts off with a heavily distorted and ugly bass riff, and it only gets angrier and angrier from there. Heavy guitars, evil riffs, pissed off gang vocals and fast beats all make this side fatal in how sick it is. ROTOKILLER's side is equally sick! Pissed off raw hardcore punk played mostly fast with occasional blast beats. (DB)
(Flying Blood)

NONNIE PARRY – "Karen Greenlee" EP

Robotussined out rent-a-RAMONES guitar riffs with a femme Jim Reid style vocalist, resulting in some super cough syrup haze sounds. The lyrics are definitely leaning towards the school of Dee Dee: "*I feel so sad I feel just like an eel / when all I want to feel is mesh and steel.*" Fans of later JESUS AND MARY CHAIN might dig? (LG)
(Exotic Aquatic)

PARADE OF SUFFERING – "Horrible Relief" EP

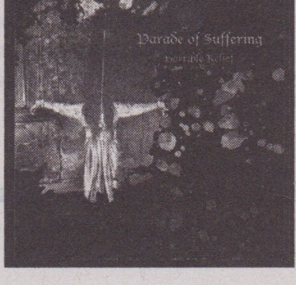
Raw and ugly hardcore grind act from L.A. Rolling and dingy, this reminds me a lot of CAPITALIST CASUALTIES, with vocal howling that's similar to MAN IS THE BASTARD all being flailed about. OTOPHOBIA SPAZZ-ticness coming through as well. The EP, so simply put, combines punk ferocity, misanthropy, grindcore recklessness, and nihilism. (JR)
(Deep Six)

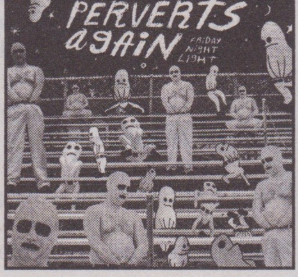
PEPPER KINGS – CD

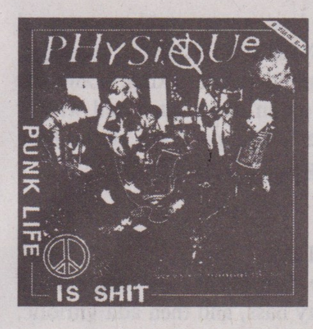
Although I wouldn't call this minimalist, or art punk, as others might have you believe, this is maybe worth a spin if you're a fan of the TINKLERS, the FUGS, or any other outsider goofy ass adults that use something other than traditional rock instrumentation. We've all seen local versions of this band. The one where grown ass adults who know damn well how to play decide to find some friends and just play for fun, making sure to not conform to any style whatsoever and just be fucking goofy. Sometimes its bare sincerity totally kills, and sometimes it clears every room it enters. There's a little bit of both aspects here, and I've granted this a few spins as well as many, many skips, including one anti-casino song that starts out with one of those racist, Native American-mocking war whoops that I can't fucking believe made it onto the disc. Y'all ain't got no friends to tell you about how that shit's stupid?? The lead singer plays an autoharp, though, and there are a few moments when that feels pretty rad. (DZ)
(Tarbeach)

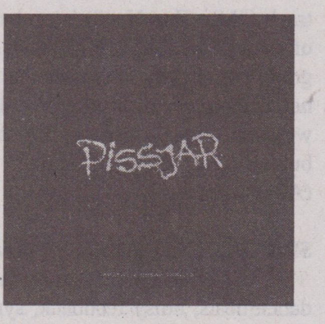
PERVERTS AGAIN – "Friday Night Light" LP

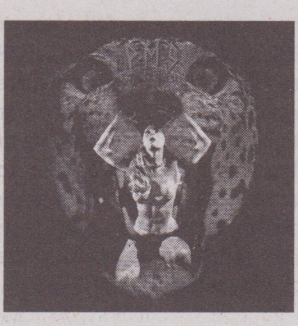
I've "liked" previous PERVERTS AGAIN records in the same way that I "like" a lot of contemporary punk bands: I thought they were good, but I didn't spend a lot of time thinking about them. Reviewing this record, though, forced me to engage with it on a deeper level. And I'm grateful for that, because while I "liked" the album on first listen, I fucking *love* it now. The music is very enjoyable, punk with that slight DEVO influence that's been all the rage for the last few years. But it's the lyrics on this record—and perhaps even more importantly, the vocal patterns themselves—that bring everything to another level. Reading along forces the listener to contemplate just why PERVERTS

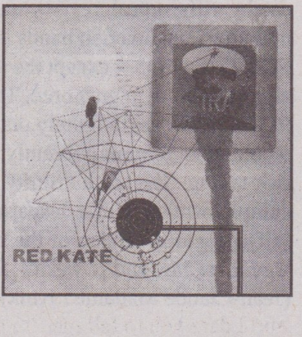












AGAIN made the choices they did: why are Levi's 514s superior to 550s? Why does "Get You Out of College" keep breaking and repeating "you out of college" while omitting the verb of the title? And what the hell is in that cereal bowl?? I don't know the answers, but I feel confident that there *are* answers, because it's apparent that this band does things with intent. PERVERTS AGAIN have a clear vision that places them a cut above most current punk bands. Early front-runner for album of the year in my book, and the novelization of the record is also well worth your time—see my review elsewhere in this issue. (MF)
(Total Punk)

PHYSIQUE – "Punk Life Is Shit" 12"

An excellent example of how a good recording and mastering job can totally elevate a record. PHYSIQUE are absolutely a good band, with an enthusiastic if formulaic take on modern D-beat, but goddamn if the energy that pours off this vinyl isn't nearly a physical thing. This sounds live in the best possible way, transmitting the band's passion and charisma with such authority that I'd not only recommend the record but also that you buy a ticket to see them live if they ever come through your town. I don't want to sell the band short though, they present eight tracks of quality blown-out D-beat with enough variety in the songwriting to make every track a compelling listen. As is par for the course with the label, the packaging is amazing, with a cool etched B-side (à la the LEBENDEN TOTEN *Static* 12") and a four-panel fold-out poster insert. The band takes advantage by providing graphics that, while still fitting the traditional black-and-white collage model, offer quite a bit more variety and food for thought than the usual low-effort template employed by many bands in the genre. I think the best that this band has to offer is yet to come, but this is a good record that looks and sounds great. (AU)
(Iron Lung)

PISSJAR – "Apathy & Cheap Thrills" EP

Former members of AXE RASH and HAG among others give us some modern Swedish thrash with '80s Pig Champion-loving guitar riffs. Very much like ETA and DS-13, with a little VITAMIN X along with the aforementioned influences, creating a raw and ripping listening experience. Also, the band created their cover logo using (you guessed it) their own hot steaming urine and creating their own "piss font" in the process. They also graciously provide a link so you, the bored punk at home, can create your very own. Stellar punk and the true smelly DIY spirit combined and presented for you here at your soiled fingertips. (RO)
(Religious Vömit)

PMS – "Cocaine Cunt" EP

This record slays! Dirty, brutal and angry punk from France. It's raw and chaotic, sometimes slow, sometimes so fast their on the verge of falling apart. If you like the Bay Area's VIOLENCE CREEPS, you'll fucking love this band. Simple, short, and destructive songs that convey hate and disgust perfectly. You must find this record. (FS)
(Danger)

PROFOSS – "Min Egen Profoss" EP

Features members of TERRIBLE FEELINGS and FY FAN among many others, has the most bitchin' cover art, and fucking shreds. ANTI CIMEX always gets thrown out as an influence, but it is no cop out to say this is pure GBG dirty thrash, as if CIMEX and the SHITLICKERS didn't party nearly as hard and had modern day recording technology and nicer equipment or a bigger government check. Fuck me if Adult Crash hasn't been releasing some good shit lately. Will blow the spikes off yer leather! (RO)
(Adult Crash)

PUNKÉMON – "Gotta Rock 'Em All!" 45

Being a fan of Dr. Frank and the MR. T EXPERIENCE, I pre-ordered this online before it ever came out. Essentially, this is a sort of Lookout! inspired super-group created to (maybe just) put out a single 7" record steeped in Pokémon. I think it's pretty much what you'd expect, which, for me at least, means it's damn good. It's that Lookout! flavor of pop punk that so many of us grew up on with a focus on the kitsch that encompassed Pokémon. (The keyboards help with that.) The B-side is all about Mel from the PHANTOM SURFERS, a bonus for those who didn't know that he was part of the super-group. If Lookout! was important to you in any way, you need to get this. (KK)
(Sounds Rad)

RABID DOGS – "No Fun" EP

Hard rockin', thrashy rock'n'roll with a sassy, cool female singer. The songs are high energy and the vocals have a bit of attitude. I just wish the music was less busy and the vocals were louder than the band. This is their first release so I'd being willing to bet that that all gets sorted out quick. I'll be looking forward to the next record. (CK)
(Aarght!)

RED KATE – "Iraqi Girl / American Zone"

Chunk-rock that attempts to tackle foreign and domestic policy concerns. Sonically speaking, Red Kate recalls the tidiness and that damn downstroke overdrive of HOT SNAKES and racket of that ilk... Feels more hard rock than punk, with vox teetering on the tightrope. TSOL is faithfully and forgettably covered on the B-side. (MC)
(Too Much Rock)

RETIREMENT – "Priced Out" EP

I know little about this new Iron Lung band, but they fit into the sound of that label without being nondescript. Fierce 1980s Midwest hardcore punch combined with some '90s East Coast garage jangle and later-period industrial metal sludge thump. BLIGHT or NEGATIVE APPROACH with the BASEBALL FURIES and HELMET or SURGERY. My favorites are the noisier tunes like "Yours Is Mine," but it's all a wonderfully bad trip to bum out your nice sunny day. (RO)
(Iron Lung)

ROUTEENS – LP

Straightforward melodic punk from Giessen, Germany with enough

catchy riffs, vocal reverb, and gloomy undertones to fall alongside melodic Scandinavian bands like GORILLA ANGREB and NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS—except the vocals are so buried in the mix that there's almost nothing to grab onto. There is a palpable rock'n'roll groove, and ROUTEENS are definitely onto something here, maybe something that would emerge more vibrantly with a little more grittiness and musical risk-taking. The track "Shift" is a total hit with some pretty excellent complementary guitar leads and catchy vocal melodies, but the less self-conscious version of the track on the band's demo recording feels way more raw and powerful. So, uh, check out their demo! (HB)
(Jean-Claude Madame / Kink)

SCUMRAID – "Control" LP
You know the drill by now, right? Well, Iron Lung collected the drill on a full length (almost) platter for you, so eat up. First Wave Of Korean Crasher Crust, Seoul's SCUMRAID sound even more terrifying when all the tracks are piled up together like this, just fist after fist after fist of loose and deadly bombastic D-beat noise / punk with a bulldozer bass defying notes and rhythm while JuYoung fuckin' *wails* out frantic beats and the guitar goes to distortion war with the vocals. It's the kind of record that makes you feel like you just got beat up...and then you flip it over. Definitely not music, this noise is meticulously constructed, and the effort pays off. (WN)
(Iron Lung)

SECT MARK – "Worship" LP
A concertgoer spewing vomit everywhere; a smashed window; a thousand conquered pints; the feral night. SECT MARK is always there, wild-eyed, grinning impishly, and chiding you on. Generation SHIT lives on, beckoning. (JD)
(Iron Lung)

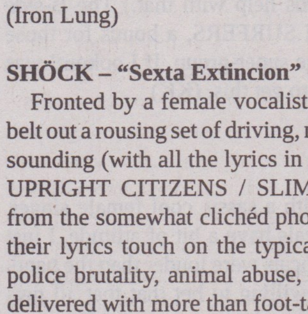
SHÖCK – "Sexta Extincion" CD
Fronted by a female vocalist with a powerful set of lungs, SHÖCK belt out a rousing set of driving, melodic punk rock tunes. Very European sounding (with all the lyrics in Spanish), and suitably anthemic in that UPRIGHT CITIZENS / SLIME / COCK SPARRER vein. Judging from the somewhat clichéd photomontage on the liner notes, I suspect their lyrics touch on the typical evils of multinationals, nuclear war, police brutality, animal abuse, and the objectification of women. But delivered with more than foot-tapping flair. (RK)
(Shock)

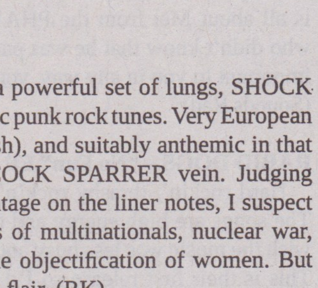
SNOR – "Scandinavian Heartbreaker" EP
Reverb-heavy hardcore with D-beat tendencies (think DESTINO FINAL) that is absolutely elevated by the playful, high-pitched vocals. The interplay between the vocalist, who sounds like the singer for a lost early '80s Spanish punk band, and the band itself, who are dishing out completely straightforward grim-sounding hardcore, is just fantastic! Given the wordplay in the record title, it's clear that the band has a sense of humor, but rather than giving in to the joke, this record is played completely straight, which makes it a very compelling listen. The last track ("Mro Zna Noc") is probably the best, a nasty mid-tempo snarl of a song like IGGY POP meets LEBENDEN TOTEN with the singer going completely nuts over the top, wailing and shrieking. Somehow her completely disarming vocals take on an unexpected and wholly welcome edge of menace, like she'd been playing at crazy all this time but holy shit, she might actually be dangerous. Great EP! (AU)
(Adult Crash)

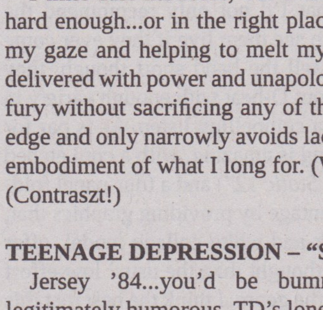
SPECIAL INTEREST – "Spiraling" LP
SPECIAL INTEREST combine dance elements like pre-programmed dance beats, noisy feedback, synth, dirty bass, and then add vitriolic, scathing vocals with a nuanced style that sounds straight out of the '70s, when punk didn't yet know what it was *supposed* to sound like. The second track, "Disco," is precise and mathy without allowing that to be an end itself, instead using the strange time signature and even stranger vocal cadence to create an uneasiness mirroring the dysphoria of life. The lyrics rip into issues of decadence, racism, and misogyny in the queer scene without losing a sense of self-reflection. Smart, thoughtful, and mercilessly antagonistic, at no time does this record allow the dance vibe to let you get too comfortable. The record is full of strange, repetitive sounds that remind me of MEN'S RECOVERY PROJECT, while the less melodic tracks have something in common with HUGGY BEAR or even *Penis-Envy*-era CRASS. The lineup includes at least one former member of New Orleans' unstoppable freak punks MYSTIC INANE, so we should expect nothing less than something this exciting and boundary-pushing. (HB)
(Raw Sugar)

STRAFPLANET – "Freizeitstress" LP
I miss fast hardcore, but I often realize that I'm just not looking hard enough...or in the right places. STRAFPLANET is helping hone my gaze and helping to melt my face with early '00s styled fastcore delivered with power and unapologetic ferocity. Harnessing full-bodied fury without sacrificing any of the speed, this record starts on a knife edge and only narrowly avoids laceration...Nine tracks that are the near embodiment of what I long for. (WN)
(Contraszt!)

TEENAGE DEPRESSION – "Skank Or Die" EP
Jersey '84...you'd be bummed too! Vaguely infamous and legitimately humorous, TD's lone EP gets a new life courtesy of Rerun Records, obscure punk plumb-pickers. "Skank Or Die" collects nine tunes centered on moments of charm and cringe. There's an inept glee smeared across it all—a piss-take "fake" version of traditional '80s hardcore—where the joke comes back around full circle and you're left puzzled, but mostly on board. While the band largely focuses on lambasting early 1980s US punk culture via a smarmy slant on the speedy sounds of their day, their take is definitely informed by deep fandom, which I can't help but be drawn in by. With the nods to the vocal stylings of Darby Crash, Henry Rollins prison fan fiction and CLASH riff repurposing, these touchstones must've razzed the hell outta any punk who encountered the EP upon release. Will the same be







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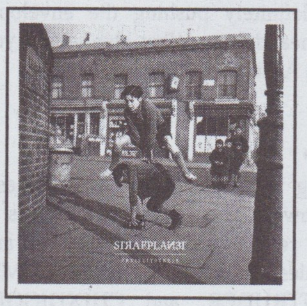
WORSHIP

Special Interests



true today? Worked for me! (MC)
(Rerun)

TIGER SEX – "Weirdo" CD
TIGER SEX is pure unapologetic outsider rock'n'roll, and their outrageous (from the band photos) lead singer Kelly Chelston will be the first to get in your face and tell you. The guitar on songs like "I Get High" reminds me of GG's SCUMFUCS, and I guess one of the MURDER JUNKIES produced this. It's dirty, it's fiercely unoriginal, it's a little too long and there's no real need for another cover of "I Wanna Be Your Dog" but there's something real and charming about the whole package. For fans of TEXAS TERI AND THE STIFF ONES or the GG ALLIN & THE AIDS BRIGADE. I need a shower after this. (RO)
(self-released)

TOTALT JÄVLA MORKER – LP
In case you didn't get enough total fucking darkness with the reissues last month, the self-titled 2006 full length is lagging one issue behind to remind you that this Swedish powerhouse still hits harder than damn near anything that has come since. Equal parts HAUNTED, Japanese hardcore, Euro-Crust, and NASUM (I'm gonna swear I hear SNAPCASE riffs too, but that's probably because REFUSED made a career out of biting SNAPCASE...just saying), TOTALT JÄLVA MORKER are loaded with speed and tonnage, and a decade later these tracks stand out even more than they did at the time. Lyrics give credence to the searing desperation in the vocals, and the intent is every bit as meaningful in 2018 as the attack is devastating in 2018. (WN)
(D-Takt & Råpunk / Luftslott)

THE TOXENES – "Hot Rod" EP
Three super hot bad girls from the wrong side of Minneapolis rock your tattooed punk ass off and steal your girlfriend. Uh...yawn. Sorry, but I've ridden in this souped up hot rod one too many times to get juiced on this one. It's a great package and they play real good and the PANDORAS song is nice, but it's all a little too clean and controlled for me. If you can't get enough of the TRASHWOMEN / 5.6.7.8's kind of thing, you'll eat this up, but I'm going back to bed. (RO)
(Killjoy)

2SISTERS – "Run, Baby! Run!" CD
Garage punk rock'n'roll from France here. I'm sure there are lots of spilled beers at these guys' shows. This is a mix of the SAINTS, the STOOGES, and that whole '90s garage revival. Raw production and raw guitars among the trash and thrash capture this band's fun energy. (RL)
(Closer)

UBIK – "Sleep" EP
This surprise banger got me super stoked! Dark post-punk, but also super snotty. The guitarist has mastered the art of thoroughly drenching their axe in so much 'verb that, really, only one string at a time needs to be plucked, for the most part. The vocals are soaked to the bone, as well, but not buried in the muck and mostly decipherable, and they totally kill. The lyrics aren't as rebellious as I'd expect from such snot and sneer, with a few songs about needing rest and needing a helping hand, but hey, that's my own personal hangup bullshit. Besides having to do research to find out that one song is about some shitty right wing politician, and not their own fucked up anti-immigrant beliefs, this is really fucking killer slab. Please check this out. (DZ)
(Aarght!)

¡VAMOS! – "1 2 3" LP
¡VAMOS! are a quirky, mysterious band from Chicago. If you take them literally, it's a come on or "come on." Whatever. The music is fast and nervous. The vocals are laid back and alluring. The whole thing sounds caught in a time warp between the '70s and the '90s. This LP sounds real nice back to back with the GREAT PLAINS album I also reviewed this month. Cool stuff. (CK)
(Maximum Pelt)

VEUVE S.S. – "Traître á Tout" LP
This band dropped a mind blowing demo a few years ago and I haven't heard anything from them since, so I was more than a little juiced to drop the needle on *Traître á Tout*...and I was not even remotely disappointed. This new release reminds me of some of the NEGATIVE STANDARDS output (especially the guitar), but with blasts tuned more towards pure fear than the bleak metal of Oakland's heaviest DIY hoard. Check the churn in the middle of "Ventres Mous" and feel yourself start to tighten up before the blast beats return...the whole record kinda keeps you on edge like that, and it's awesome. VEUVE S.S. don't shy away from melody, but it's always dark and weird, and it's usually brief, and it tends to give their exceptionally unique approach to hardcore brutality even more power. Excellently executed. (WN)
(Nerdcore)

WARM BODIES – LP
In a word: Frantic. In some other words: Warm Bodies capture the urgent edginess of their wonderful live show on this bursting and highly sick album. Yes, "sick" as in quite cool, but the traditional and infected definition is equally applicable, if not moreso. I'm only half-kidding when I posit that, thematically, the album examines what it must be like for a child to encounter and examine their first turds: nervous marveling, puzzling attempts to make sense of it all, sniffing it out—basic human experience! Primal enough? Freak quotient met? It oughta be. Miss Lady's vocals bewilder and jut in dangerously playful ways... One of my favorite current voices! The guitar work is total balloon animal lunacy, oblong and free, so original and killer. Choice moments to ponder are "I'm In The Sky" and the oh-so-punk "I Smashed It," but it's gravy front-to-back. Zoom toward this one, see them live at all costs as well. (MC)
(Lumpy)

YARDWORK – "Earn The Rock" LP
Old man punk from Texas! Kinda reminds me of POISON 13 or

MINUTEMEN. These guys are definitely pushing the envelope: sometimes aggressive, sometimes meandering. What else would you expect from a bunch of geezers from Austin? (GB)
(Rock Tumbler Records)

THE YOUNG ROCHELLES – LP

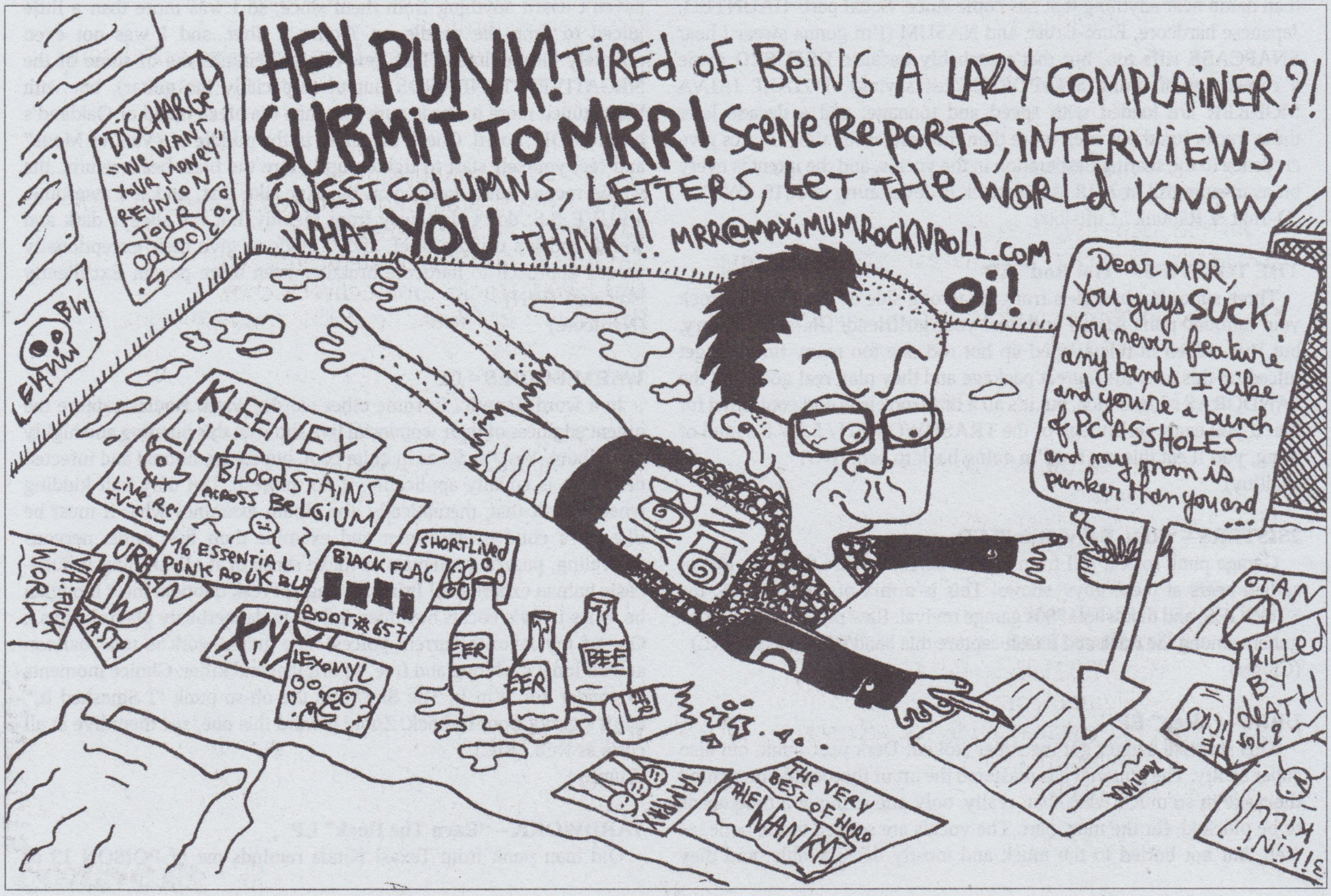
I'm totally feeling the first song "I Never Saw the Ramones." Goddamnit, me neither, and I know how much it sucks! This is bubblegummy Ramones-core done really well. Super melodic and sweet vocals with perfect harmonies. Reminds me a lot of MR. T EXPERIENCE, MASKED INTRUDER, and CHIXDIGGIT. Songwriting is on point and the recording is really clean. (DB)
(Sounds Rad)

ZOOPARTY – "Lardass" LP

Here are three dudes from Sweden that sound like a gang of nine. That's three times density on this album, and it's a solid one. "Set The World on Fire" and "Two Different Sets of Rules" are both made to be included on "What I'm Listening to Now!" mixtapes and punk radio playlists. The vocal-less intros on every song are the fourth member of the band that everyone wants to hang out with after the show. The hype is rebuilt every few minutes, and this band needs to pat themselves on the back for perfecting their formula. Don't be thrown off by the minimal album cover. This is a band that rocks, and not a trashy Euro-trance dance party, as the cover may suggest. For reference, if you like the BOUNCING SOULS, you will love this. (RH)
(Deadlamb)

V/A – "Concrete Jungle Records: Lucky 13" CD

This is my first exposure to this German punk and hardcore label, but it's an (almost) entirely sonically pleasant one. Like many European labels, they seem to be largely devoted to US bands, but who knew (certainly not I) that the likes of the GENERATORS, ADOLESCENTS, DEATH BY STEREO, PEACOCKS and AUTHORITY ZERO were still around, and still battering out the hits!? And both the driving melodic punk of BURNING LADY and mod-esque stylings of the MOVEMENT were a bit of a revelation to these elderly ears. Twenty-one tracks from twenty-one different bands from their roster. I could do without the TURBO AC's and MAD SIN, but you can't have everything. This actually reminds me of the excitement of some of those classic compilations from yesteryear. (RK)
(Concrete Jungle)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DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(CP) Colin Peden
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JR) Jason Ryan
(MD) Michael de Toffoli
(MR) Matt Reynolds
(WN) Robert Collins

BLOOD NOIZE – *Hardcore Anatomy* – Cool name for a tape, but this is not hardcore, at least not hardcore in the noun sense of hardcore. Instead, this tape's anatomy consists of intermittently intriguing soundscapes that grate, which may or may not be the point, and frighten, which is almost certainly the point. Lots of heavily, heavily processed guitars and / or synthesizers, I can't really tell which is which. For percussion, there's the occasional machine gun blastbeat, probably electronic. Snarled vocals and cry-for-help lyrics that I associate with pre-Columbine metal (e.g. "kill everyone," "I don't want to live," "motherfucker," etc.). Horror noise, I guess. (MR) (4?-song cassette, lyrics not included, bloodnoize.bandcamp.com)

CHOP OFF YOUR ARM – Finnish grind / hardcore that would have sounded at home fifteen to twenty years ago, but this was recorded in 2017. Doesn't sound dated now, but it stays true to its roots, if you know what I mean. Vocals are throaty and incomprehensible, but not monstrous. Good riffs with just enough changeups and breakdowns to keep you engrossed. No solos to waste your time. Truly solid. Rewarding upon repeated listens. (MR) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, jkoivistoinen@gmail.com)

CHUNX – Pop punk that doesn't have the lust for life of prime-era Lookout! Records or the inescapable tightness of Fat Wreck Chords, but instead settles somewhere near a more tuneful BAD RELIGION. It's not going to make you disavow *Suffer* or anything, but it's got a wistfulness that I think is appropriate if you are going to be playing in this genre in the late 2010s. Several 1-4-5 chord progressions and palm muting and such. Occasional cringey "whoa-oh-oh" background vocals. As an esteemed *MRR* coordinator once told me, and I paraphrase, if you aren't literally standing next to Glenn Danzig, you cannot ever, ever, ever "whoa-oh-oh" during a punk song. I don't make the rules, I just enforce them. But minor traffic violations aside, this is a worthwhile release. (MR) (7-song CD-R, lyrics not included, facebook.com/chunxband)

CLARE – *always afternoon* – This four piece melodic post-punk band from Houston, Texas has an interesting collection of styles. BREEDERS-esque surf shimmer collides with some mid-'90s Brit pop harmonies and languid vibes. The first song, "L.A.," has the bass guitar prominent in a sort of Peter Hook lead bass role that I, ever a sucker for a bass line, keep returning to. "Loquats" reminds me a bit of JAPANESE BREAKFAST, while "Far" is a more raucous pop song. "Dress" is a song that tells of an elliptical lost romance (or something more sordid and sad) about why one would keep a dress in the closet yet never wear it again. I've listened to these six songs several times and am still enjoying unpacking the angular moody post-surf sulk rock contained within. (CP) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, clarehtx.bandcamp.com)

CRIMEX – *Demo 2017* – CRIMEX from Olympia play a deliberately arranged and particular style of punk: raw and heavy hardcore D-beat. And this tape is great and stands out among a slew of imitators. The vocal pitch excels, remind me a lot of ARMISTICE and CALLOUSED, and more recently RITUAL CONTROL and LIFECHAIN. Anyway: unique, humble and killer drum fills show up throughout, while retaining its powerfully direct and undeviated style. Crunchy, crispy, and sizzling guitar all on a foundation of gurgling bass, get a hold of this tape! (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, crimexoly.bandcamp.com)

CRUMB – *Clean Up The Crumbs* —I've bummed out on garage in the past because it seemed so obnoxiously nostalgic, but CRUMB from Vancouver has made a bludgeoning batch of six songs in less than ten minutes that'll fucking beat your ass. It's weirdo psychy garage rock, but with furious, almost *Helvete* scowling screams that don't make it dark as much as they make it raw and rabid. Big, hairy, thick bass that chunks through like bare knuckles, and comfortably overdriven guitars with a bit of a wobble that comes out sounding like they're being pulled apart and ripped in half. Definitely one of the more intense and weirder garage punk bands that I've heard. (MD) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, crumbvancouver.bandcamp.com/album/clean-up-the-crumbs)

FRENTE NORTE – *Demo 1* – From Ohio, singing entirely in Spanish, here is a grimacing, stomping example of ugly and happy street punk. Loud, sloppy and punching, with wild experimental solos on the first half. Sounds to me like early '90s NYC squat punk. Beer spilling and feel-good freedom punk with some lovely traditional country twang during the second half. I think I heard a maraca. I want to feel all the time how these guys sound: good, with the spikey sun on my face. There were only 50 made, and according to their page, they are all gone. (JR) (4-song cassette, Spanish/English lyrics included, frentenorte.bandcamp.com)

HONEY – *Demo* – This band is weird, creative, and totally on the same page, even if I wasn't. It's like hearing people perfectly speak another language: I don't know what they're saying, but I believe every word. HONEY is freaky psych-garage hardcore from Winnipeg with raunchy and raw guitars and bass, and drums that sound like a shootout massacre with an absolute halo of bullets all over the cymbals. The vocals give it that weirdo psych sound because the singer has so much reverb and delay on her voice that she almost laps herself, creating a turbulent wake of shouting words. It gives it this really intense sense of urgency that's so weird and so effected that it mushes together, but it's all so tight that it fits. (MD) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, honeypunx.bandcamp.com/releases)

KACKALORUM – *Kackalorum 2014* – The internets tell me that this Swedish band's name translates to "Hullabaloo," but that is an approximation, because they play some pretty sweet hard rock that, despite being "garage," shows that these fools know what they are doing. The A-side of the cassette is three originals, and the B-side has covers of GG ALLIN, the FLEUR DE LYS, and the STOOGES. So yeah, proto-punk garage mess of the "sweet licks, bruh" variety. (CP) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, soundcloud.com/kackalorum)

LASSIE – *Yes! Like The Dawg* – Synth-drenched freak punk rock'n'roll...Like those NW Indiana kids grew up and slowed down (a little too much at times) and started hanging at the bar instead of shredding in the basement. But it's all super fucked sounding, like it was recorded under water or some shit, and that means that it kinda sounds like it rules. Curious to hear what LASSIE could do with a "professional" full length—I suspect minions might moisten. (WN) (6-song cassette, no lyrics, no contact info)

LOUD NIGHT – *Demo 2017* – First thing I noticed here was the excellent use of not one, but *several* different metal fonts on the cassette cover (only call it a j-card if you are a nerd). Also, *legible* metal fonts. Good one. Musically, it's gritty hard rock / metal that never gets too fast or too punk. Similar in vibe and sound to mid-career MOTÖRHEAD. Maybe late-career MOTÖRHEAD. You know, the kind of music where you probably don't have studs on your leather jacket, but you might have studs on your fingerless leather gloves, and you're definitely wearing fingerless leather gloves. (MR) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, loudnightband@gmail.com)

MUTILATE – *Fortress Of Suffering* – Holy fuckin' time warp - this 2017 banger is pure demented '80s thrash / death glory. Downtuned and tortured tormentations with fervent blasts tempered by awkwardly lurching slows and hellish vocal manipulations. This three songer is uncomfortable to listen to—desired effect achieved and highest recommendation offered. (WN) (3-song cassette, no lyrics, c/o 408 E. Marshall St., Ithaca, NY 14850)

ORGAN DONOR – *Demo* – I would guess it has been used many times, but holy shit if ORGAN DONOR isn't the perfect band name for *any* punk band in *any* punk subgenre. Super-serious hardcore band? ORGAN DONOR. Communal-livin' crust punk band? ORGAN DONOR. Gearhead trash punk band? ORGAN DONOR. Carnival twee punk band? ORGAN DONOR. Shreddin' skatepunk band? ORGAN DONOR. Sixties revivalist frat-punk band? ORGAN DONOR. All perfect! This happens to be ORGAN DONOR, hallucinogenic death metal band, which works just fine. I do wish they'd named this tape *Organ Grinder*, rather than *Demo*. Like most death metal, ORGAN DONOR is busy guitars and busy drums accompanied by demon growling. Enjoyable. Apparently recorded in 2012. (MR) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, organdonor1.bandcamp.com)

THE PLURALS – *Swish* – The PLURALS' public relations team refers to them as a "power trio" and I'm not going to quibble with that. They compare themselves to HÜSKER DÜ, which I would, too, if I was in a power trio, as the DÜ are the powerest of power trios, but the guitar-bass-drums this reminds me of most is the JULIANA HATFIELD THREE. Alas, there is no song on *Swish* 75% as good as "Spin the Bottle." If the JULIANA HATFIELD THREE made you pine for the BLAKE BABIES, then the PLURALS might make you pine for the JULIANA HATFIELD THREE. Significantly, each of the PLURALS' three members takes turns on lead vocals, and their voices are *very* different, making this an occasionally jarring listen. (Not unlike *Candy Apple Grey*, now that I think about it.) Also worth noting, the PLURALS dress up like sad clowns on the album's cover and inserts. I shit you not. I do not know if this is a plus or a minus. I guess it depends on your feelings towards clowns and sadness. (MR) (13-song CD-R, lyrics not included, gtgrecords.net/theplurals)

RAD MAX – *Rad Tracks* – Some kind of accidental Brat Pack resurgence here, ready made for a bad boy scene in a teen movie with a target audience 30 years my junior. Perhaps over-indulgence at times, and I'm still trying to figure out how they sneak THIN LIZZY leads into an Anthony Michael Hall montage, but RAD MAX succeed in sounding different from everything else I have heard this month. (WN) (4-song cassette, no lyrics, no contact info)

STUNTED – *Fault* – The seven songs on this cassette by STUNTED are odes to the seven deadly sins, crafted by Alex Petralia of Oakland, CA band NOPES. There's some really good claustrophobic minimalistic industrial vibes going on here; "Crave" wouldn't feel out of place on *Pretty Hate Machine*, but there are also some more primitive jams that would make Steve Albini drop the Nutter Butter out of his mouth, sit up, brush the crumbs off of his jumpsuit, and take note. My good buddy Marisela Guizar drops some saxophone on "Green," so there goes my critical objectivity down the drain. Shall I recuse myself? Naw. These deadly sins go down good and quick, so you can sit there and think about those bad things you did, then listen again. This cassette reminds me of when I started smoking cigarettes and learned about industrial farming, but I think that speaks more to my advanced age than it does to the music. Life is kinda funny that way. (CP) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, drwgmusic.bandcamp.com/album/fault)

TASER – *Social Exclusion Blues* – Heavy sludge from Finland. Slow with powerful, chunky riffs. Vocals are kinda high-pitched, but nicely offset by the slow & low of everything else. Emphasis: *low*. Has a song with the word "crawl" in the song title, which is apropos, but occasionally a tune will break into a gallop (or, at this speed, maybe it's better called a prance or a trot), which is novel and worth the price of admission. Excellent use of feedback. So-so use of talking samples. Probably to be enjoyed by fans of CAVITY. Good show. Like, really, really good. (MR) (4-song cassette, some lyrics included, tasersludge@gmail.com)

V/A – *Dog City, USA* – Smart cassette comp of all Hattiesburg, Mississippi bands. Impressive that a city of 49,926 people can produce this much killer punk all at one time. No soft underbelly here. Some of the bands sound kinda similar, but that's not really a critique. Personal faves include (1) PLEATHER; (2) EYE JAMMY's "Dog City USA," which would be the comp's namesake tune if it only had a comma, and which, after careful consideration, I decided, yes, is a hardcore song; and (2) everything by JUDY AND THE JERKS. Comes with a cool mini-poster that you'll dig if (spoiler alert) you're into cats. Recommended if you like sk8parks. (MR) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, earthgirltapes.bandcamp.com)

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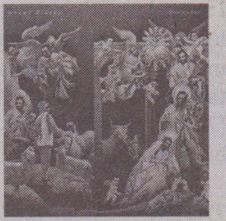

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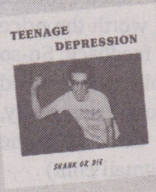

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CABOOSE #8: REDRAFT PICKS

$1 / 62 pgs

Liz Mason puts out a lot of zines, and they are almost universally awesome. It's an enjoyably repetitive task to review another one of hers, and I fear sounding like I'm the Liz Mason rep on the QVC zine hour. I just don't have the hair to be a TV salesperson. You're going to enjoy this. You're going to enjoy anything you pick up from her. I feel like I do have to say something specific to this issue though, so here is a list of things I learned about and am now a better person for having read: quotes from Vana White's autobiography, an extensive list of nicknames for Liz's cat, a story of driving a cargo van to pick up a large trove of vintage print erotica, and a wild mention of Francesca Lia Block's *Weetzie Bat* books (a high school favorite series from my goth phase). (RH)

PO Box 477553, Chicago, IL 60647 / lizmasonisawesome.com

CHEAPTOYS #21

€2 / 64 pgs

Cool A6 "a l'italienne" zine with typewriter text and attractive layout / design. The underlying theme seems to be finding joy in staying engaged with the world when things blend into sameness and interests expand past the familiar. Starts out with the intro that sets the tone well, touching on the alienating effects of digital communication, gentrification, political discourse, and air conditioning. The French content of this issue is a translation of the Slingshot network, pieces about St George's Hill and Bread & Puppets Theatre, and an interview with Chavire. English content covers the importance of hand drawn maps (which struck me as particularly timely since I saw a news item the day I got this issue about Google adding corporate businesses to its directions), interview with person behind Fluff Fest, and a rumination that blends together thoughts on punk, being in a new city, the films of Jem Cohen and noise making. Finishes up with a photo section that blends bands, travel, and architecture. Well-made and worth your time. (JA)

Giz c/o CIRA 50, rue consolat 13001 Marseille France / cheaptoys@riseup.net / cheaptoyszine.tumblr.com

EVERYTHING IS BULLSHIT #2-3

Trades only / 18 pgs

Although not thrown together all willy nilly, this wild mess does have the feel of a stimulant-induced all nighter. Interviews with manic as fuck Neo Neos, fellow zine writer Information Man, dark collages, and even a full page request to share mix tapes. It's pretty punk as fuck, and the amount of ink covering your hands afterward is incredible. If you want some negativity from me, then, I'd say to cut it back down to half size, as this is a little filler heavy, and kind of a stretch for its size. Otherwise, this is a killer read, and kind of perfectly sporadic. You should absolutely check this out, if only to have a fellow freak to trade tapes with. I hope this motherfucker likes African jazz, whacked out country from space, and internet-culled recordings of famous people drugged out of their minds singing nursery rhymes to scared as fuck kids. (DZ)

E.I.B.S. 12905 Water Wheel CV Austin, TX 78729

GENDER FUCK HOT JAMS VOLUME 6

30 pgs

From the cosmic to the collective to the personal, *Gender Fuck Hot Jams* explores the impermanent and sometimes fragile ways that we construct narratives about our identities and ourselves through a comic book style that is intricate and well-composed. The plot largely focuses on Imnata Andaeitha, who emerges from one flesh into another, and in that form becomes a mechanic / trucker. Their story is one of disgust in cisheteronormativy (with cis men appearing as large phalli) and of hopes for revolutionary transgender liberation. A beautiful, uplifting zine for these dark times. "Hack your body in order to hack the planet! Hack the planet in order to hack your body!" Kudos to Mona Demone for the captivating work. (JD)

chizaramama@gmail.com

KOOGMO #11

$1 or trade / 20 pgs

Part perzine of the zinester, Anthony Abelaye, and part outlet for prisoners to get their letters out, Koogmo is mostly a collection of journal entries with a few scattered items, such as a letter from a post office announcing their shortened hours to punish homeless people for seeking warmth. This issue features a letter from Christopher Bressler, a prisoner in Pennsylvania, and includes information on how to reach out a send a nice letter back. Anthony tells some stories about visiting Mexico, hanging out at a flea market, and a smelly trip to Goodwill. If you like reading about people just getting out and doing their people thing, this zine will hang out in your interest zone. (RH)

PO Box 861294, Plano, TX 75086 / koogmo.com

MINIMUM ROCK + ROLL #8

$2 / 8 pgs

Minimum Rock + Roll (abbreviated *mRR*, naturally) is a truly precious zine: eight mini pages of tiny writing about underground rock music, featuring one longer interview, one shorter interview, and a few reviews. I have no real interest in the music covered here, most of which is indie rock or emo-adjacent, but I appreciate the care that has gone into creating this zine! (MF)

reflectivetapes.storenvy.com

ONE SINGULAR DATE

$6 / 46 pgs

This is a tough one, as the author, Ryan Fletcher, is a friend of mine. We aren't incredibly tight these days, but he is a pretty important figure to me and most other people who traveled through the D.C. area and played house shows in the late '90s and early 2000's. We have fed each other and he has housed me and my bandmates more times than I can recall right now, and we have shared some beautiful moments, as well as some terrible losses together. What makes this tough is that this zine is an account of his pretty severe assault, as well as his never ending physical and emotional recovery, from an event which occured over a decade ago in his own neighborhood. Although short and to the point, this is not an easy read. A brutal reminder that no matter where we stand socially or politically, violence is always right around the corner from most of us. I think I'd sound like a complete idiot if I didn't write a fully thought out, three page explanation on my thoughts on white punk kids being the oblivious footsoldiers of gentrification, but I've only got a paragraph or two, so I'll just say that this shit cuts deep. To hear a fellow punk, a fellow anarchist, a fellow activist, a kind person and friend, retell a brutal assault, painful recovery, fears of irreparable brain damage, and even anger with his support group, is pretty fucking jolting. This isn't a how-to for survivors, or even for support groups of survivors, but it's a pretty vital read for anyone who has dealt with this sort of violence, and I might add, part of an incredibly important discussion on gentrification that I don't feel like punks discuss enough. I highly encourage you to check this out. (DZ)

PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE
£2.00 / 52 pgs

This is a photo zine of one author's attendance of shows at a Sheffield venue called the Lughole. It seems pretty much like mostly aggro stuff, as there are a lot of (but not exclusively) snarling, scowling skinhead looking types and bald grimacing muscle dudes in SXE shirts. Of the one hundred or so photos, there are probably six that include women, and maybe zero people of color. Maybe it's the author's own personal choice in music, as they had to travel fifty miles each way to see a show there, and not a precise example of the scene in Sheffield, or even the venue itself. Either way, it doesn't seem like my crew. There are a few scant shots of longhair bedroom rockers, and a sweet dude in an Onsind t-shirt, so hopefully it was a little more diverse than I'm giving it credit for. This is probably super awesome for the tough guy punks of Sheffield, and I hope the Lughole II comes to fruition and is super rad. I'd hate to see your fun time come to an end just because a building got sold, even if you guys seem a little more macho than I could hang with. (DZ)

daveyghc@yahoo.co.uk / qualitycontrolhq.bigcartel.com

TATTOO PUNK #1
$10 / 40 pgs

The new zine from Ben Trogdon of *Nuts* fame is here, and it's all about...tattoos?! Yes, tattoos. As someone with only one tattoo (ten years old and rarely visible) with some negative gut feelings about tattoo culture, I wasn't sure this one was for me, but it turned out to be very enjoyable. Interviews with tattoo artists and aficionados are interspersed with high quality photos. The interviews are frequently funny and insightful, and thankfully absent of the machismo and cheesiness I (perhaps unfairly) often associate with tattoo culture. Everyone seems refreshingly candid in the way they talk about their tattoos, both the ones they love and the ones they regret. And the zine looks fantastic: the full-color photos are balanced by a decidedly punk aesthetic. The whole thing is well worth a look. (MF)

Tattoo Punk % NUTS! Fanzine, P.O. Box 1959, New York, NY 10013 / vegetablesgreen@gmail.com

TEAMSWAMI ZINE VOL. 2
12 pgs

Rocket From The Crypt created a ravenous and devout fanbase, with many willing to tattoo themselves with the band's logo solely to receive free entry into their shows. For those hungry for more RFTC paraphernalia, this fanzine dedicated to the band will likely temporarily sate anyone desperate for more info. Indeed, this zine was created by someone who was active on the forum of RFTC's record label, Swami Records. Volume two features submitted scans of setlists, guitar picks, mailorder forms, photos, and two memories from different fans. It is likely that only true fans of Rocket From The Crypt will love this, but it is still made with a care that can be appreciated by others. (JD)

polianarchy@yahoo.com

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL # 152/153
$3.25 / 60 pgs

Reviews (shows and recordings), interview with Fea, memorials for musicians who passed in 2017, current political climate (mostly electoral stuff but branches out a bit) and touch base on personal stuff (Boone moved from Missouri to Iowa). Plenty of pictures to go along with the show reviews. (JA)

PO Box 1444 Columbia, MO 65205-1444 / ttwn@hotmail.com
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TRUST #188
€3 / 66 pgs

Always reliable, Germany's *Trust* covers the DIY scene with aplomb. There are nice interviews with the bands Quest for Rescue, Wolf Mountain, Tics, and Stun as well as Kink Records and the booking collective O-Ton Musik. Add to that photos, reviews, and columns, and you have a damn fine zine complete with a beautiful, spare layout. I just wish I read German so I could understand all of it. (JD)

Postfach 11 07 62, 28087, Bremen, Germany

URBAN GUERRILLA #20
$10 / 34 pgs

This is a photos-only zine that serves to document many awesome shows and happenings in the Bay Area, mostly focusing on Oakland, from between 2014-2017. It's printed to a very high quality, and it's apparent that the photo selection has been curated with excellent care. Most of the photos are a dramatic grayscale, but a few choice selections are printed in dazzling color. If you have an interest in the Oakland punk scene, love photography, or just need a new item in your coffee table zine collection, this will be an excellent addition. I've been fairly mesmerized by the photo of the punk in the "[peace sign] OF SHIT" T-shirt that makes up the front cover. It's just wonderful. The artist, Matthew Kadi, has an excellent eye. (RH)

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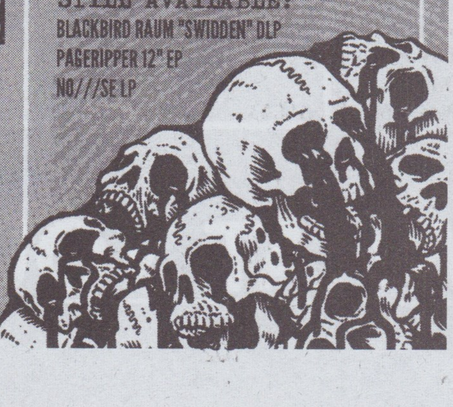

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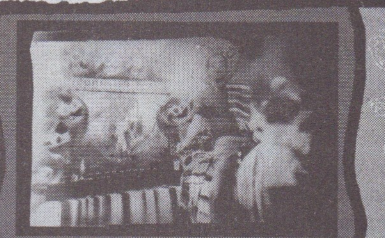

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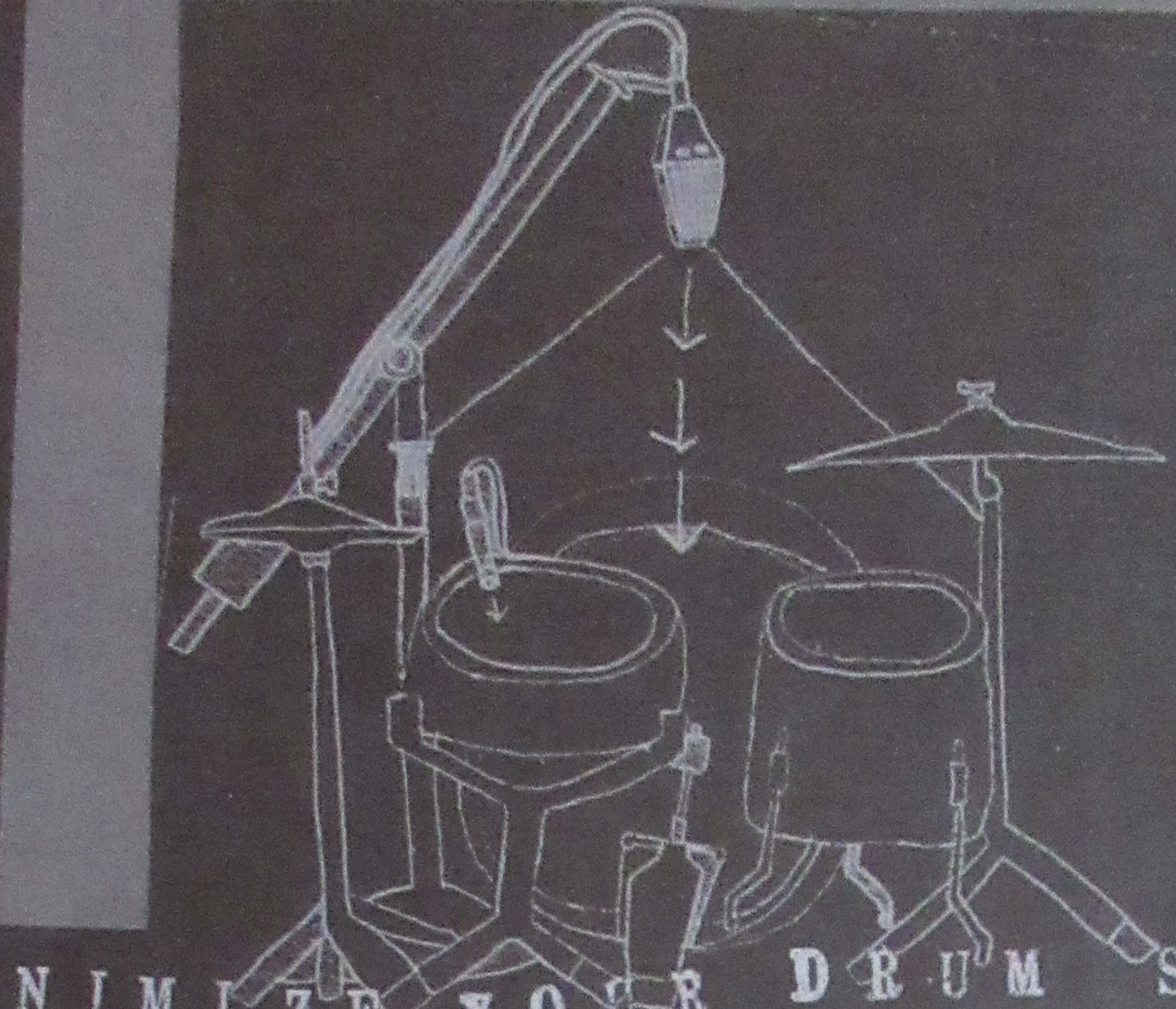
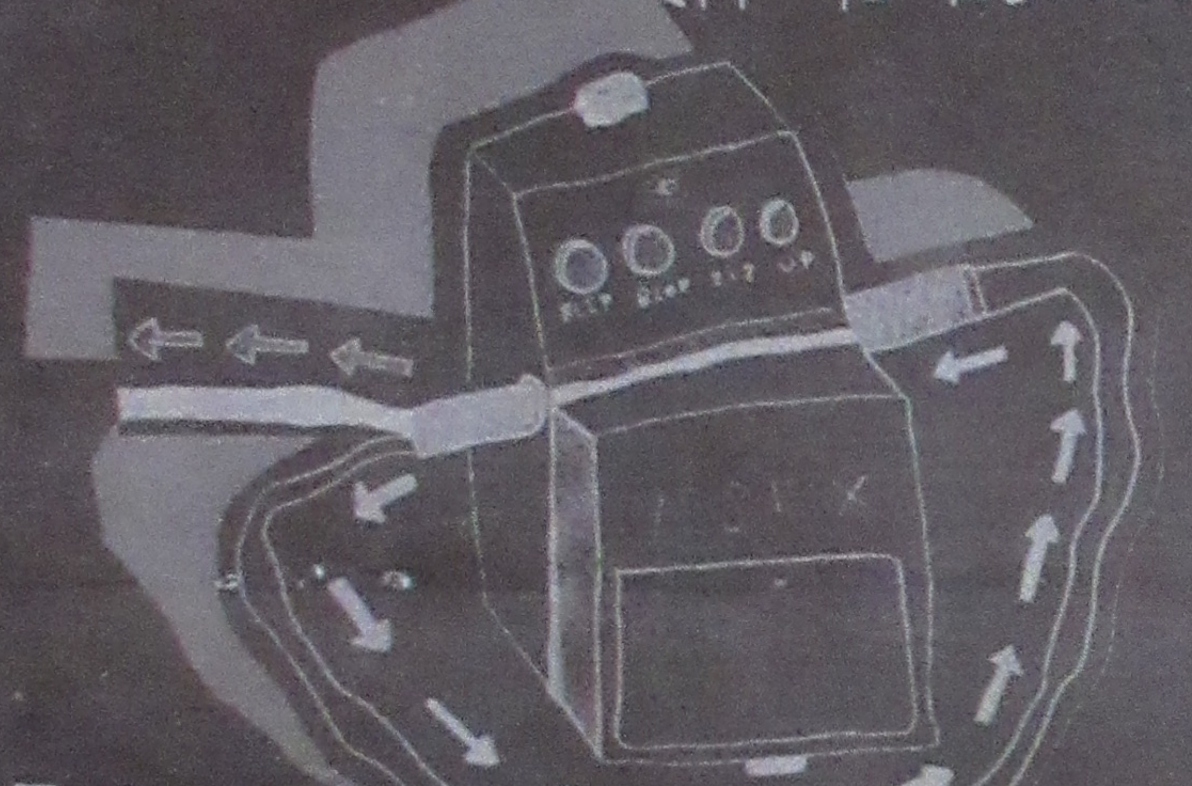
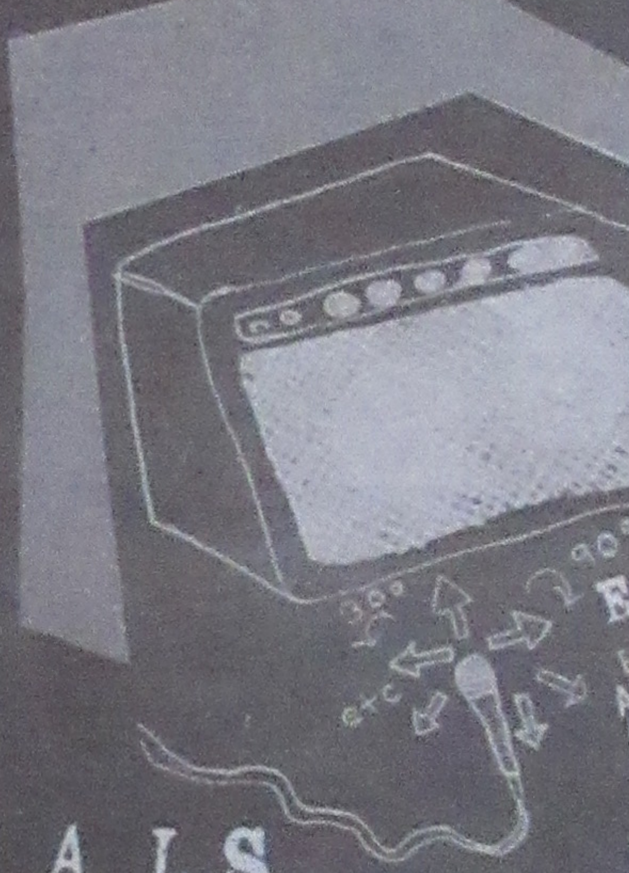


MINIMIZE YOUR DRUM SET UP

A MILLION DRUM MICS CAN PROVIDE DEPTH & 3D SOUNDS, BUT CAN GET MESSY QUICK. MINIMIZE THE NUMBER OF MICS ON THE DRUM KIT TO REFINE THE CLARITY.



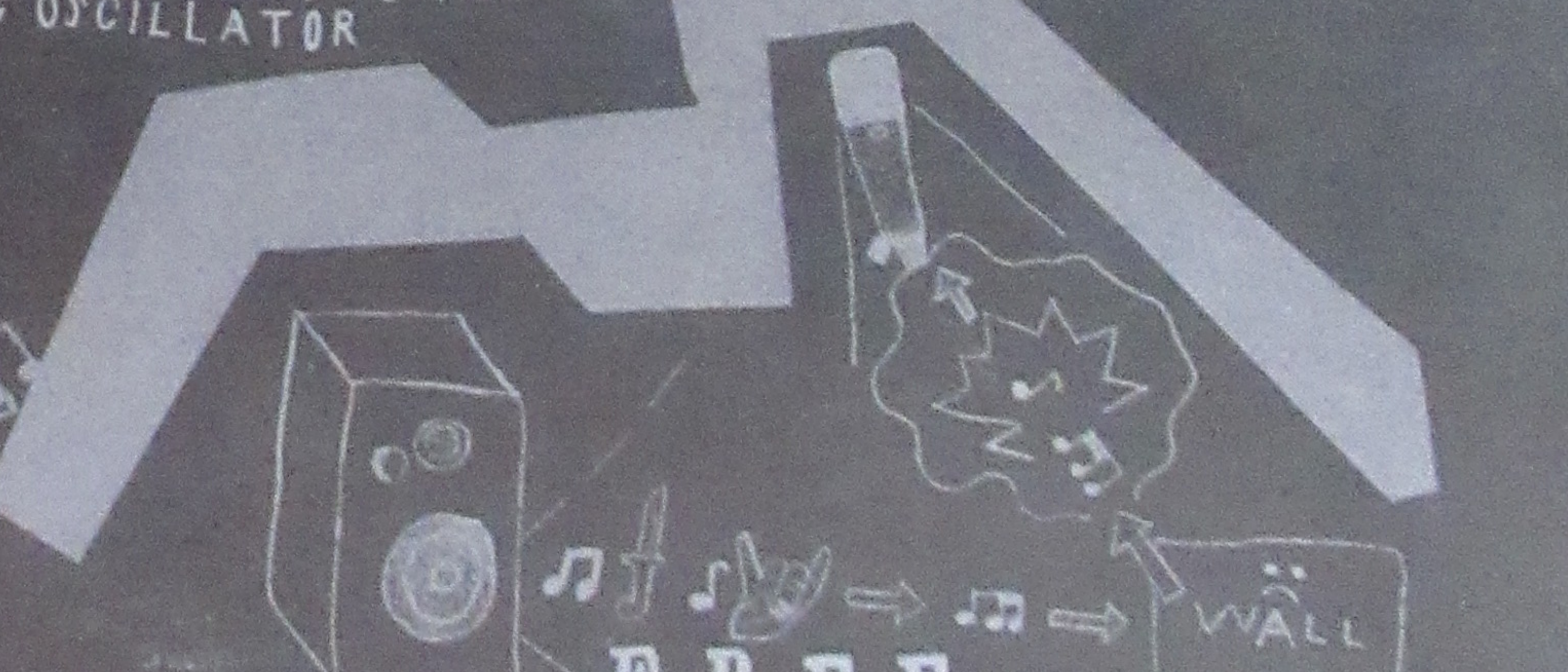


EQ BEFORE REPOST

EQ BEFORE YOU RECORD BY MOVING A MICROPHONE'S POSITION ALONG A 360° AXIS. THE SMALLEST ADJUSTMENT IN THE POSITION OF A MIC CAN PROVIDE THE BIGGEST SHIFT IN TONE

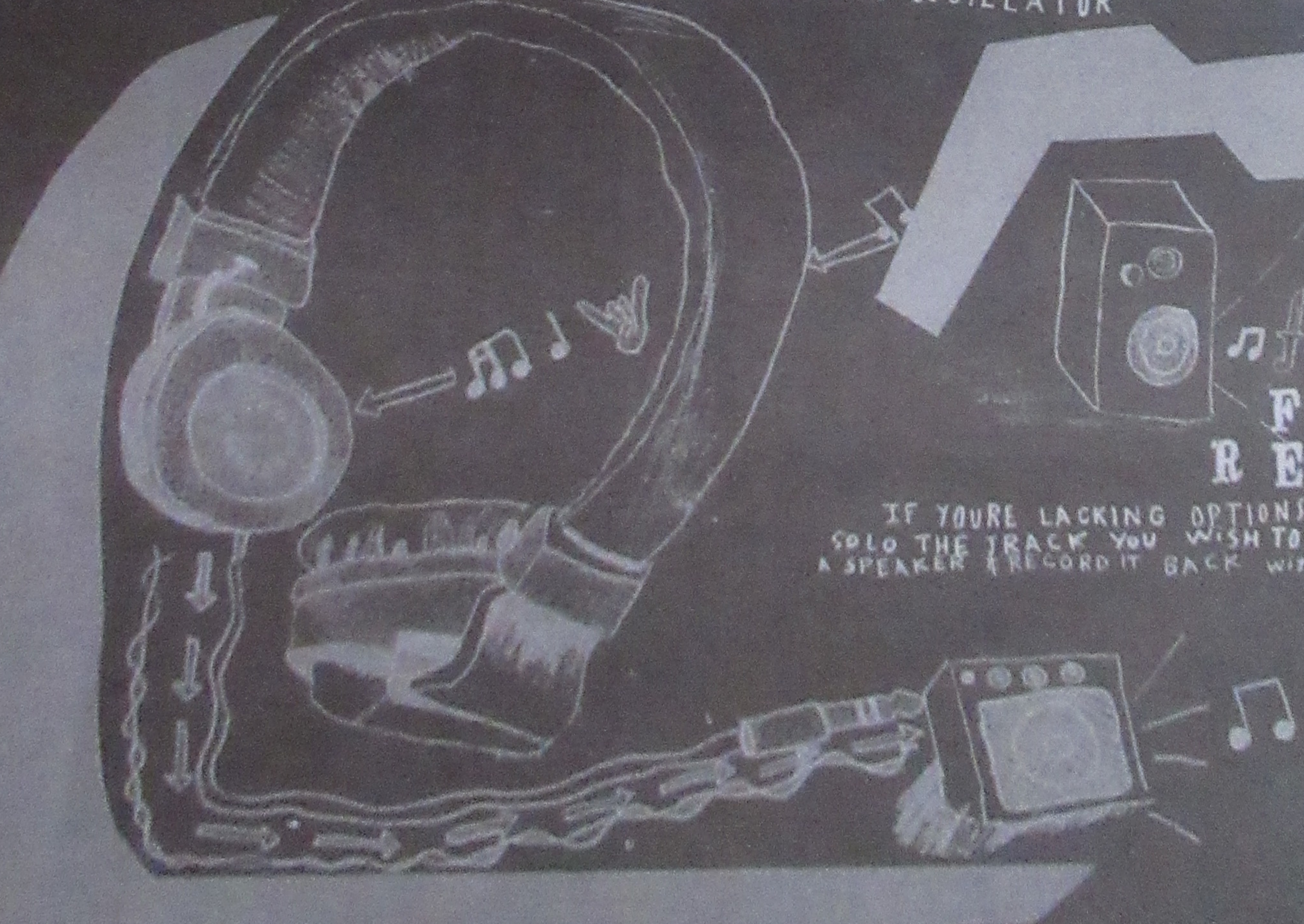
FEEDBACK YOUR PEDALS

USE A 1/4" SPLITTER TO DOUBLE THE OUTPUT OF A GUITAR PEDAL, LOOP ONE OF THE OUTPUTS INTO THE INPUT OF THE PEDAL AND THE OTHER OUTPUT TO AN AMP, ETC YOUR PEDAL IS NOW A CRAZY NOISE MAKING OSCILLATOR



FREE REVERB

IF YOURE LACKING OPTIONS FOR REVERB OR ATMOSPHERE. SOLO THE TRACK YOU WISH TO 'VERB OUT, PLAY IT BACK THROUGH A SPEAKER & RECORD IT BACK WITH A MIC PLACED DISTANTLY IN THE ROOM



ANTIMICROPHONES

NON MICS CAN BE VERY INTERESTING SOUNDING MICROPHONE REPLACEMENTS YOU CAN USE HEADPHONES AS A MIC AND CAPTURE REALLY BIZARE TONES YOU CAN FURTHER SCULPT THE TONE BY USING GUITAR PEDALS TO AFFECT THE SOUNDS